

**A DEFINITIVE EDITION AND ANALYSIS OF  
THE TJAKOVA MYTH  
OF THE  
VAKAVANGO**

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## ABSTRACT

The field work for this thesis was never a "safe" project, but a very important one if a people's heritage (the Vakavango heritage), which includes memories of generations of migration and therefore some potentially highly informative data, was not to be lost. The project, concerned with the traditions of a people living on both sides of the Kavango river, on the border of Angola and Namibia, began when the Angolan civil war was already in full swing on the northern bank and the liberation struggle was already heating up in Namibia.

The first purpose was to produce a definitive version of the most important myth cycle of the Vakavango, the myth in which Tjakova is the chief actor. The second purpose was to subject the myth to analysis as one expression of these peoples' religion. These two purposes are interactive. To decide what must be included and what excluded in a definitive version of the myth is to have already begun analysis.

The definitive version with translation and notes is presented in chapter 5.

The study of the myth in context has enriched our understanding (and that of certain climatologists) of the contemporaneity of myth and of its community generation and modification. Its analysis has, we believe, vindicated our chosen method and, in particular, it has revealed the nature of the myth as consistent with an extended period of migration. It identifies the myth as, what Cumpsty calls, bridging myth, bridging, not between the contradictory aspects of experience with which the structural anthropologists were concerned, but bridging out from one basic paradigm for reality toward another. It has enabled us to suggest something about the myth's history and to explain some of its aberrant features.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, our analysis seems to confirm what Cumpsty says when he protests that the structural analysis of myth as a primary entity, rather than as a tool of religious expression, is a very dubious proceeding. If Calloud is correct, that a structural analysis of myth requires that one begin by breaking down the myth into units on the basis of meaning, then the analysis must begin by recognizing the paradigm for reality within which the myth moves. That is, recognizing which religious type or types the myth serves. This becomes clear when we show how meaning depends upon which paradigm for reality one is moving within. Meaning significant units do not have to be the same in each. The identification of the paradigm or bridged paradigms in operation is the first logical step in the analysis of a myth. If we should be right in this, then it may be the case that any quest to understand culture qualitatively must begin by making clear the paradigm for reality within which one is operating.

The thesis has a number of limitations decreed by the situation in which it was undertaken.

The problem of wars on both sides of the border was always predictable, but while they have slowed the research down they have not in the end prevented the necessary data being gathered and our understanding of it being tested back in the field. There are, however, two obvious potential gaps in information that were not predictable nor in our

control. They have to do with the time of arrival of these people in the Kavango area and their subsequent spatial readjustments, and the form of the myth that may survive among the descendants of kin who stayed behind, more than a century ago, in present day Zambia.

The former gap is the result of an embargo upon all official records that might relate to land claims. This has been in effect since the Administrator General took over in, what was then, South West Africa. The second gap is the result of the refusal of the Authorities to grant permission for a visit to Zambia. Enquires directed to academic centres and religious organizations who might have had contact with the group concerned failed to elicit the require information. It does not however appear to be a threatened group and the information ought to be obtainable in more settled times. We concentrated, therefore, upon obtaining and testing data from the group that is the primary concern of this thesis and which is very threatened indeed.

A further limitation lay not with the context but with tools. In making the decision that the analysis would take place within an understanding of religion as the primary fact and of myth as its instrument, we decide to employ Cumpsty's general theory of religion. At the time this did not exist in a unified form but rather in a series of papers and teaching documents. In the end we were able to use the publishers' draft. This meant that we had to assume that the reader would be without access to this unfamiliar theory. We therefore set out the sections needed in full or in extensive paraphrase, with page references to the draft version.

In a world where, as Gerard Manly Hopkins once observed, "all is seared with trade, bleared, smeared with toil, wearing man's smudge, and sharing man's smell? Where terror with its ten thousand faces has become endemic in ten thousand places' - all in the name of what was once so hopefully called: the pursuit of happiness."

"Even when we have remarkably - how else could we survive? - adapted ourselves to such conditions, the thought would sometimes in moments of pause arise, whether in some far corner of the world there is no piece of earth which has escaped the sickness of the age. Some place where the soul-searing tensions of modern living, geared to both survival and progress, do not exist ... Where men, still in reasonable numbers, live quietly, humourously with sufficient food, shelter and opportunity for play ... beside a translucent, pollution-free river, ever flowing serenely .... where nature still obtains in pristine abundance, from the primitive denizens of the river, like crocodiles and hippopotami, to the sky - poised fish eagle sounding its haunting lonely cry .... where a vast, game-rich hinterland still lies, for the use of stone-age people living with ancient earth intelligence of the roots and prints and animals of the land ... where the sky in midwinter blue, tranquil as the river itself, arches infinitely overhead ... where in summer clouds gather like ancient men-of-war closing their ranks, to thunder majestically over a shimmering landscape ... where a cosmic hush then falls over the earth and the rain comes down like a heavenly curtain."

"Is there yet such a land, where learning and the arts are still taken lightly, sufficient unto the day? Where ancient forms of tribal government have been gently synthesized with modern democracy, so that communities, on the whole, can live happy, ordered, well-provided for lives."

"This is neither fantasy; nor is it an exercise in the romantic. It is not Utopia. Such a corner of the world does indeed still exist. It is to be discovered where the Kavango River, descending from the central highlands of Angola, forms over a distance of more than 400 km the north-eastern border between that country and South West Africa. It is the land of the Kavango people."

## PREFACE

This dissertation is dedicated to recording the extant versions of the Tjakova myth cycle as it is to be found among three of the five language groups of the Vakavango, a people now living for the most part, on the southern bank of the Kavango river in northeastern Namibia, and to preparing a definitive edition in the original languages and in English translation.

Namibia has recently been decolonized. For some decades it was under intense pressure. This was particularly the case for those parts bordering upon Angola. During this period and for many decades before, it has also been subject to the influences of Christianity and Western civilization. What survived of the earlier tradition hung by a thread. If it was not gathered, it might well have disappeared. Being a member of the Kavango people, the author shares their desire to record that heritage, and to preserve as much of it as might be relevant to the enrichment of modern life.

Among the traditions of these people the Tjakova myth cycle stands out because of its size and coherence. It also seems to have, potentially, a considerable explanatory value for anyone who would enter their world-view.

To "record" is not simply to reduce the oral traditions to written form, but to seek to understand what they have

meant, and therefore how they have functioned, for these peoples as far back as the evidence will take us. Already the natural manner of communication among the Kavango people is vanishing. Their traditional use of metaphoric language even in daily communication has meant that when speaking European languages they are not well understood and there is great pressure upon them to adopt the literal style. Thus Kavango youth do not well understand their elders. Yet their ways of reasoning and their interpretation of the environment is for the most part structured by the character of their mythologies. This was considered by the colonizers as a mark of "primitivity" and lack of rational thinking. The question is can such opinions be justified in the 20th century.

This, of course was a monistic world-view in which religion and life, man and nature, and the myths which related them were all one, and European researchers with their own presumptions have failed to penetrate to the roots of the matter but have tended to distort what they found by imposing their own distinctions upon it.

It is an undeniable fact that many in the Kavango area, especially, but not only, the younger generation, look down upon the culture which their predecessors transmitted to them. This state of affairs is a great mistake. The present generation can learn much from the culture of their predecessors if they have the humility to respect the ways of thought and a life-style widely differing from their feeling for reality now. The demands of the twentieth

century do not necessarily prevent a group of people from turning to the faith and social structure of another age with sympathetic understanding, and recapturing some of its vanished strengths, which may in turn help them to understand more clearly the assumptions and beliefs of their own time.

There are problems concerning the origins of the myth. It has been suggested that the Tjakova myth is a reflection of the Bible and therefore relatively modern, others, among them Romanus Kampungu, have seen the Tjakova myth as a forerunner to Christianity in that part of Africa and expressing similar ideas. Most commentators have treated the myth simply as an indigenous product of the Kavango people produced during their migration from central-east Africa, and through their struggles to adapt themselves to the new cultural, social and economic environments they found in the Kavango.

There are also many problems in the interpretation of the myth. Why are there cycles within cycles? Why is there social inversion, and is there not a hint of transcendence? These and many other issues will be dealt with in the text. The chief concern has been to set down the most authentic version of the myth itself. What authentic means in this situation will become clearer in the discussion of the diffusion of the myth. Such sections and versions of the myth as others had set down were drawn upon in the early versions, but the final version is the result of very many hours of field work, as, of course, are the explanatory notes and the first level of analysis. Thus the disabilities



of the situation have not affected the definitive edition of the myth, but rather have rendered the reconstruction of the historical background and therefore some matters of interpretation less certain than they might otherwise have been. The sources drawn upon are listed in the appendix.

The thesis is in three parts. Part I contains a description of the Kavango area and the people who live there, their present localities, historical origin, lifestyle and beliefs. Part II contains an account of the diffusion of the myth in the Kavango area together with the definitive edition. Part III contains the theoretical materials for the analysis and finally the analysis itself.

The author's hope was not to produce a document that would be put into archival collections, but to make a contribution towards the better understanding of the Kavango people, both by themselves and other groups.

Through myths and folktales we can become acquainted with the heritage and values of these particular groups, which extend far back beyond any written history, toward the time when the first stories were told to explain life and the mysteries of nature.

There are many different views of the nature of myth and therefore many different ways in which it might be analysed.

In this work myth will be understood as an instrument of religious expression and communication. It will therefore be understood as the expression of a people's sense of reality as that is currently experienced, as it is now, given a certain time lag.

Myth, once authenticated as an expression of a people's sense of reality, may come to serve many other purposes and may go on doing so if and when it ceases to be myth in the present sense. Likewise, the stories which are the building blocks of the myth may be drawn from many sources and have a history of their own. None of these other matters will be our concern in this work.

We will see that "reality" is not a single concept among the Vakavango, but in recent decades, and perhaps for two or more centuries, they have lived between two world-views. It will be seen that Tjakova is a "bridging" myth which can be understood from two quite different perspectives, thus serving to hold them together while not overcoming their differences.

The author began research on these myths in 1975 while a lecturer at the University of Zululand and between 1981 and 83 was able to do extensive field work in the Kavango area of northern Namibia. Field work began again in December 1985. In these last years, however, the situation in the area had deteriorated rapidly, until the author had sometimes to be accompanied by UNTAG officials in order to

visit neighbouring groups within the Kavango area where he was born. Had it been possible, the author would have wished latterly to visit not only the related group in the Caprivi and Botswana but also in southwest Zambia and southeast Angola. It did not prove to be possible.

Official records of the sub-groupings and the localities that they have traditionally occupied within Namibia, were embargoed during the latter years of the research. In the situation we had to rely on such secondary sources as exist. These exist in all the surrounding "colonial" languages, Afrikaans, English, German and Portuguese. Much of the general description of the area and the life style and beliefs of the people is in the personal knowledge of the author and of those whom he could readily consult. Where the history is of significance in the analysis of the myth secondary sources were checked as far as possible by interviews with the older members of the groups and with others who have attempted to set down the history and culture of these people.

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I am aware that this thesis is very much better for all the various help that I have received, but at the same time I accept any shortcomings which may still exist as being mine alone.

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE KAVANGO AREA AND ITS FIVE LANGUAGE GROUPS

This chapter contains material drawn from written sources and from data gained from interviews in the field. It is an overview of the location, origins, and present life-style of the Kavango people, and is intended to help the reader to orientate in the later discussion and the analysis of the myth. It is by no means a comprehensive review of social, economic, material and cultural matters among the Kavango people.

We will begin with the general context and with the present situation, but the last decade has seen many and profound changes. Our concern however, is with the experience which shaped and legitimated the Tjakova myth cycle, and therefore the setting which we will be trying to reconstruct for the reader is that in which the older members of the tribes grew up, and then what ever we can, of the world which preceded that.

At the present time the Kavango area and its five tribes, the Vakwangali (earlier Vakwangari), the Vambunza (earlier Vambundza), the Vashambyu (earlier Vasambyu), the Vagciriku, and the Hambukushu, are experiencing rapid change. They stand at the cross roads of many cultures. They are exposed not only to the Christian Missionaries and Western Technology but to increasing intermixing among themselves and with neighbouring groups and with groups previously unknown to them, the Vanyemba, who fled the liberation struggle and then the civil war in Angola and settled amongst them. Even the Khoe, or Vambarakwengo as the Vakavango (Kavango people) call them, the Bushmen still living their stone age life, are gradually becoming integrated with the others. Traditional customs and values together with the mythic world-view that carried them are being eroded fast, as are the traditional social structures.

While those at home become more mixed, many, particularly the young, no longer content with a subsistence culture, are moving off to become the labour force in urban centres.

Kavango ancient tribal customs such as that of clan membership determined by matrilineal descent, is disappearing as is the traditional role of chiefs as their powers get mixed with those of central authorities.

The changes which are perhaps the most destructive of ancient ways however are those which arise from the "taming" of the river. First the mission stations and then the central authorities have established irrigation schemes. The



used to live on the extensive islands in the river, this is no longer the case.

"The section of the Okavango River concerned extends from about 17°18'S, 18°21'E upstream to about 18°51'S, 22°17'E downstream, a distance along the river of some 520 km (323 miles)." (Gibson 1981).

The villages of the Kavango peoples, can also be found on the lower courses of certain Ndonga or Muramba which are the dry river beds that join the Kavango valley on both south and north. Before the Angolan liberation struggle and later on the civil war, additional settlements of the Kavango people were situated away from the rivers in the region belonging mostly to Angola, namely Mbunda (or Mbundu as Gibson called it) which stretches between the lower Quito (Kuitu) and Kavango Rivers and the lower Luyana and Kwandu Rivers. This whole area is divided politically between the Caprivi Strip of Namibia, Rivungo Circumscription in the southeastern corner of Angola, and the northeastern portion of the Northwest Districts of Botswana. Along the Kavango River the tribal territories of the five peoples are considered distinct by the members of these ethnic groups, although villages of any one of them may be found in territory nominally attributed to one of the others. In the Mbunda region distinct tribal territories were not officially recognized.

The Kavango River, which the Portuguese called Cubango, as well as its Kuito tributary, rise in highlands of Huambo,

Sambo and Bihe Mountains in west central Angola, where the average annual rainfall is in the order of 1200 to 1400 mm.

It is generally accepted that the Kavango peoples had arrived in the Kavango Area by the end of the 18th century. Mertens asserts that "The main body of the present five tribes, moving southward along the Kavango River reached the area about 1750, a hunting expedition, according to legend, having discovered the Kavango itself."

The Herero by that time had left their previous settlements along the Kavango River. What could have decided the Herero to leave the Kavango area and move further eastward is a secret of history which is today nowhere to be traced. There are assumptions that this could be attributed to the malaria problems in that area or, as Hereros are herdsmen, that they could have been looking for better areas for their cattle. Fortunately it is not a concern of this thesis.

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Traditionally the Kavango people lived and are still living on both sides of the Kavango River which forms in our present day a political border between Angola and Namibia, dividing the same group into two separate citizenships. Despite such political division, the inhabitants on both sides of the River consider themselves to be the same nation. Members of the same families can be found on both sides of the Kavango River which is the national pride of

all the Kavango people. "No Kavango River, no Kavango nation".

The first Western People who made contact with the Vakavango on the north bank of the River were the Portuguese. "Merchants who had settled in coastal Angola were the first Europeans to establish trading relations with Kavango Peoples. A map dated 1851, showing the five lower Okavango tribes located along the river in their present order, was published with a geographical account of southern Angola written by a merchant of Mossamedes, Bernadino J. Brachado (1867)". Bernadino J. Brachado is believed to have visited the Kavango area in 1849 <sup>2</sup>. The Kavango area consequently was colonized on the north bank of the river by the Portuguese and in the south by the Germans. "In 1884 Germany formally declared the territory of South-West Africa a protectorate, the government, however, made no attempt to bring the Okavango region on its northern border under control until after the turn of the century. German hunters began to penetrate the region of the lower Okavango after 1885" <sup>3</sup>, but a Swede, Karl Johan Andersson, a "hunter, naturalist, adventurer, and merchant" <sup>4</sup>, reached the Kavango area at the Ukwangali region in 1859. Another European who explored the Kavango area was Frederick Green. He moved northward, starting from Lake Ngami situated in Botswana. He is believed to have visited the capital of the Hambukushu at the Kavango River in 1855.

Mertens says of the area: "It remains one of the strangest, most intriguing rivers in the world. It gathers its clear

silt-free waters in central Angola. Strengthened by the equally limpid stream of its main tributary, the Kuito, it forms for almost half its length the north-eastern border of South West Africa. Near Andara it then cuts through that most unusual tongue of land reaching towards the Zambesi, the Caprivi. It finally spills into the vast marshes of the Kavango in north-western Botswana, there to gradually lose its life in the Kalahari sands." To other groups who have no historical and traditional attachment to this river, such peculiar characteristics mean nothing, but to those who have stayed there for centuries, the disappearance of the Kavango River into the sands has a certain symbolic significance which is articulated, "as a symbol of human life being slowly dissipated and shallowed in the pursuit of an impossible ideal."<sup>5</sup>

During March to May when heavy rains fall on the highlands in Angola, the Kavango River overflows its banks. During this season, which is autumn, the river forms a true and really dangerous natural barrier between the Kavango people who live on the northern and southern bank of this river. During good years the autumn season starts in March and runs to the end of May. The winter season generally begins at the end of May and runs to mid-August. From mid-August to the end of August there is generally, what, in the Kavango people's seasonal concept, is a short breaching season, which is neither winter nor spring. This they call "Mangenyena" (little warmth). In good years the spring season begins at the end of August and lasts till the end of October. In times of severe drought the spring season can

be prolonged until the beginning of December. Generally rain starts falling as from the end of October but the heavy rains occur from December to February and this is regarded as the summer season.

The river and the annual seasons are not however the only factors controlling the agricultural viability of the area. There also seems to be a longer cycle in which the annual rainfall rises and declines. In earlier times this seems to have been from flood to drought, today the river anyway, is more controlled, but the cycle is still marked. Gibson draws attention only to the great variability, saying that in a 36 year period annual rainfall ranged from as low as 210mm, to a high of 875mm. On average, in one year in four the annual rainfall would be less than 400mm, and this just suffices to grow some maize only because the land in question is just above the flood plain of the river. In the experience of the author there is a distinct cycle in the annual rainfall level. It is his impression that the cycle is from 5 to 7 years, others in the area have agreed to this view, although other considerations suggest that the period may be longer. We will return to this matter in greater detail when we come to the analysis of the myth.

#### The five tribes in their traditional regions:

In this section we will endeavour to give brief descriptions of the Kavango people as they have been situated in their tribal regions, starting from the easternmost part of the

Kavango area and moving westward. Documents quoted here are listed in the appendix which also contains maps.

- (i) The Hambukushu and the Mbukushu Region. Mumbukushu, the singular form of the tribal name, is apparently the source of the variant spellings found in the older English and German literature namely Mampukush, Nampukush, Mampukushu, Mambukuschu, Moombokoosho and Mpukushu; in Portuguese it is always Mucusso." (Larson J.F. 1981 p. 213).

Starting from the border of the Kavango with Botswana and the Caprivi, there is situated the region which the inhabitants of the Kavango area call Mbukushu. The traditional tribe and the one which is still in the majority in that region is called Hambukushu. They speak Thimbukushu. This does not necessarily mean that the Hambukushu are strictly confined to the Mbukushu region. The majority are to be found in their traditional area, but they are also present in the other areas within the Kavango, as well as in certain parts of the neighbouring territories. In the Kavango the majority of them, dwell along the edge of the savannah forest and sandbelt. In the neighbouring regions the Hambukushu occupy certain floodplains along the Luenge River which is in Angola, and a region called Tsau which is in Botswana, regions along the banks of the Zambesi especially near Kazungula, and there are many in the Eastern Caprivi. Traditionally, members of the five tribes in the Kavango area may live

in any of the five tribal regions if the concerned tribal chief gives permission. As Rundu, which is situated in the Shambyu region, becomes the growing capital of Kavango, a great number of the Hambukushu now live and work there.

- (ii) The Vagciriku and the Gciriku region. The nearest neighbours of the Hambukushu moving westward are the Vagciriku who occupy the Gciriku region. The Vagciriku speak Rugciriku. Rugciriku is strongly related to Rushambyu because, as we will see in the discussion of the historical background, both Rugciriku and Rushambyu are generally accepted to originate from an older language called Rumanyo, a language these people spoke at the time of the migration.

The Vagciriku inhabit mostly the high banks bordering certain sections of the Kavango and Kuitu River valleys. Nowadays many of the Vagciriku, as in the case of the other four tribes, also occupy regions deeper inland where there is water and soil which is suitable for agriculture and grazing. The majority of the Vagciriku are within the Gciriku region but a great number of them are also at Rundu. Smaller numbers of the Vagciriku are also in the other four tribal regions, as well as in Eastern Caprivi, Botswana and certain parts of Zambia.

(iii) The Vashambyu and the Shambyu Region. Westward of the Gciriku region we find the Shambyu region which is mainly occupied by the Vashambyu, but includes today Vanyemba and also many Rukwangali speaking groups. The Vashambyu speak Rushambyu which is a sister-language to Rugciriku. The Vashambyu at the present time are to be found along the south bank of the Kavango river and also inland where life is possible. Nowadays very few of them are on the northern bank of the river. Members of the Vashambyu are also present within the regions belonging to the other four tribes.

The group who called themselves Vamanyo or Vamashi at the time they were at Uruyi, Mashi, Mpupa Island and even for a while after arriving in the Kavango area, during their migration are believed to have split into two independent groups under their own chiefs. The group who later called themselves Vashambyu, settled in the area around the modern Rundu, having received assistance from the Vakwangali in their war against the aborigines, the Twa (Khoe) and Hanikwe (Canikwe) and Vatjaube (a segment of the Yeyi, now living at the Chobe and in the Kavango Swamps). The royal clan of this group called themselves the Vakwankora (those of the Parrot) which it is believed could have been derived from the fact that during their migration they stopped for a while on a plain where they lived mainly on fruit. Even today the older people within the Shambyu still speak old Rushambyu which is near the



Rumanyo from which Rushambyu and Rugcirikyu are believed to have originated.

The other segment of the Vamanyo remained for some years at Mpupa Island in the Kuitu River (Kuito) under the leadership of a younger cousin of the Vashambyu leader. These who remained behind became Vagciriku whose royal clan chose the name Vakafuma (those of the giant frog). Nowadays the royal clans within the Vashambyu and the Vagciriku are still related to one another namely the Vakwankora (those who hungered or those of the parrot) among the Vashambyu and the Vakafuma (those of the giant frog) among the Vagciriku.

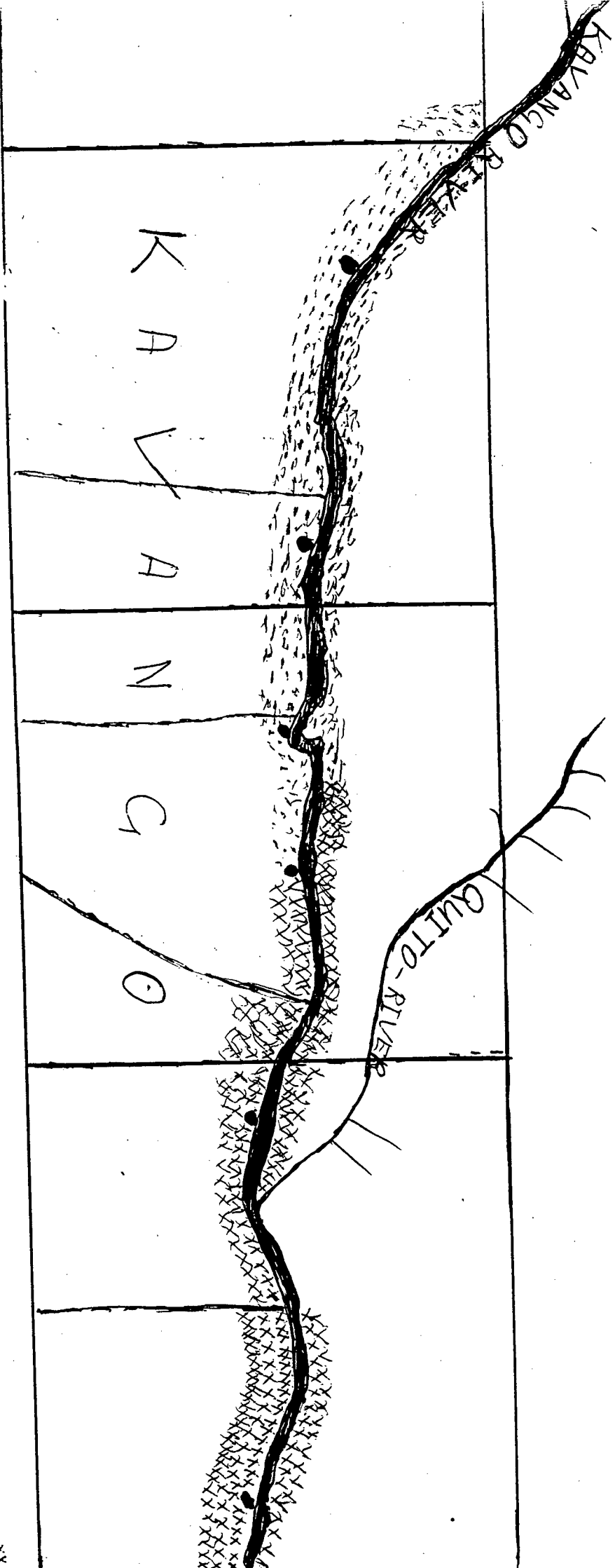
(iv) The Vambunza and the Mbunza Region. The nearest neighbours of the Vashambyu moving westward are the Vambunza who occupy the region called Mbunza. In earlier days the Vambunza spoke a language they called Rumbunza which was closely related to Rushambyu but which later became more strongly related to Rukwangali. Nowadays the Vambunza speak Rukwangali. The Vambunza occupy both banks of the Kavango River within the Mbunza region, as well as regions in the inland of the Kavango area. Smaller numbers of the Vambunza are in the other four tribal regions.

(v) The Vakwangali and the Ukwangali Region. The last and the westernmost region bordering Ovambo is the Ukwangali region. This region is mainly occupied by the Vakwangali though a number of Ovambo are to be found there. The Vakwangali, though a great number of them now speak the other languages, traditionally speak Rukwangali.

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- 1 Gibson, Larson and McGurk, The Kavango Peoples, Franz  
Steiner Verlag G M B H - 1981, Wiesbaden
- 2 ibid., p.24
- 3 ibid., p.24.
- 4 ibid., p.25.
- 5 Mertens Alice, South-West Africa . Kavango, Fien Wake  
Press, 1987 Singapore. ex unnumbered introduction

↑ NORTH

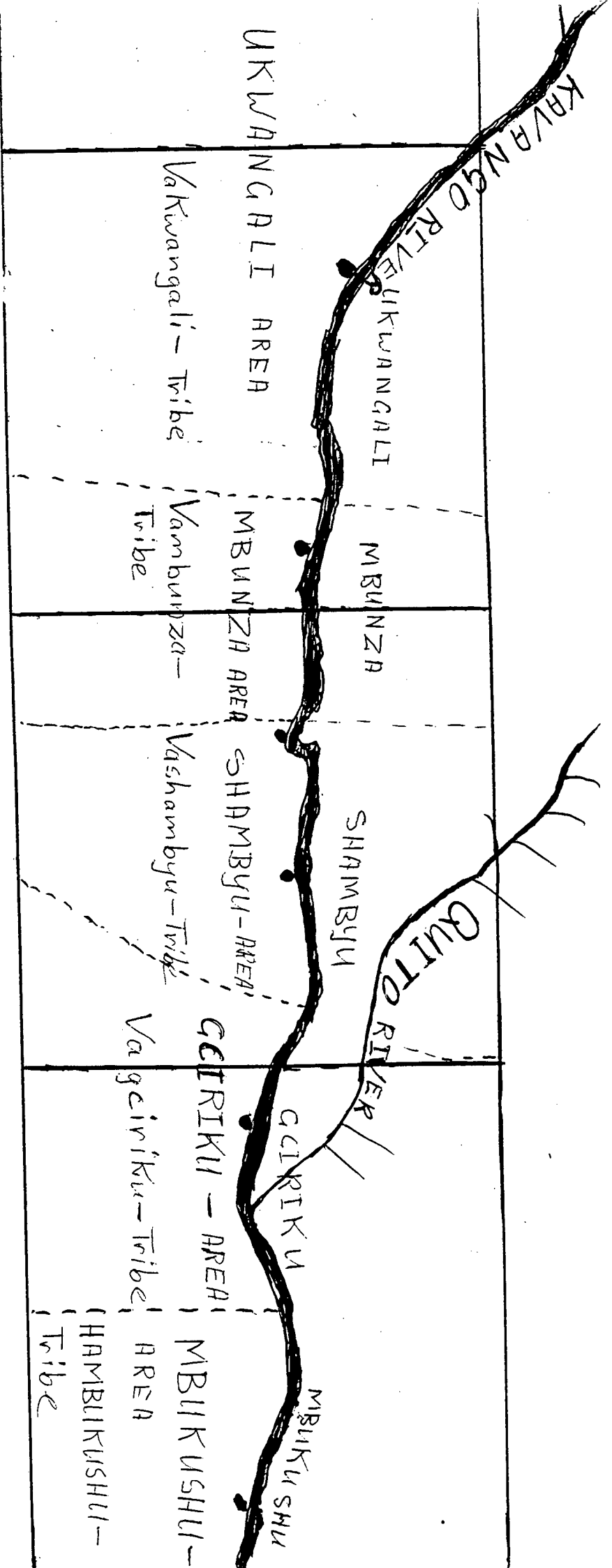


1908 - 1950

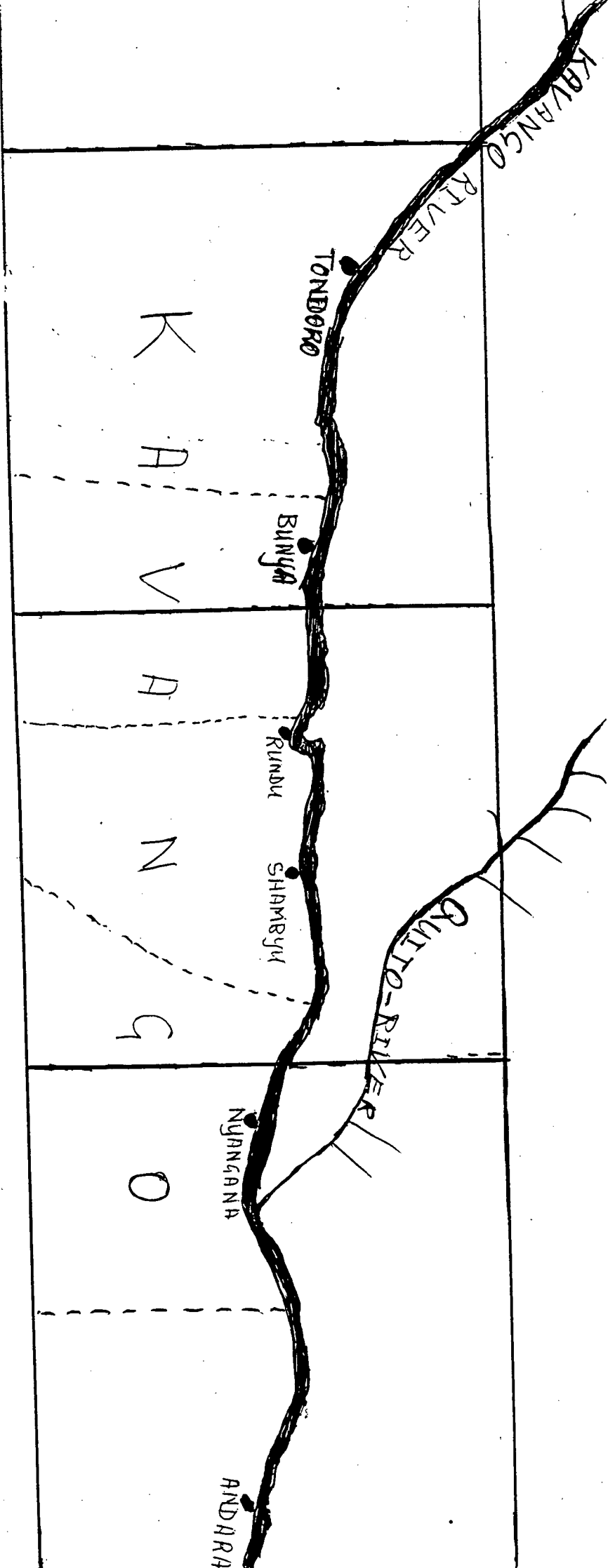
← SMILIKITA-MYTH  
DIRANENE-MYTH

↓ SOUTH

TIJAKOVA-MYTH →  
MIKINWA-MYTH



1910-1950



## CHAPTER 2

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE KAVANGO PEOPLE

#### Historical Memories

There has been over many centuries a major migration of African peoples towards the south. The ancestors of those peoples who now occupy the Kavango area were undoubtedly a part of this greater movement.

There are many conflicts within the written and oral assumptions on which the Kavango People and their languages are traced. So far no comprehensive work on the origin of the languages of the Vakavango has been written. Which of the opposing assumptions are to be considered the right ones is beyond the purpose of this work and the skills of the writer.

The following opinions are derived from discussion with, and some written notes provided by, Dr Maria Fisch, a German medical doctor who has done extensive ethnological research

among the Vakavango. They also derive from interviews with Dr Budack, the former Deputy Commissioner for the Blacks in what was South West Africa, as well as numerous older folk among the Vakavango.

The history of the Vakavango can be traced back to the beginning of the 18th century when they were living on the west bank of the upper Zambezi in present day Zambia, from where they are believed to have been driven out by an invading aristocratic group originating from Lunda and under the leadership of one Mwanambuye (Mwanaserunda, in some sources).

This previous settlement, knowledge concerning which is still carried in the memories of the older people (some of whom had visited the area) and which was recorded by early missionaries, is believed by all groups to have been at Mashi, Uruyi and Mbunda. Even today some of the Kavango families identify themselves as Vamashi or Varuyi, meaning, people who come from Mashi or Uruyi. The details of how each group came to their present area, and of how they split to form the present language groups varies from group to group. These are recorded below in spite of the repetition involved.

Because in earlier times these people placed historical events in relation to the years for which their chiefs ruled, a list of chiefs, where available, has been appended to the remembered history of each group.

They would, of course, all have arrived at the northern bank of the Kavango River before they started moving across the river to settle along its southern bank.

(i) The Hambukushu:

According to Larson, who drew upon various old documents and the Hambukushu oral traditions which had been collected by missionaries and others, the Hambukushu believed themselves to have come from a very far country in central Africa which was said to be called Musuma.

Their migration from Musuma is generally believed to have been by means of canoes (mawato), down the Kabompo River until they reached its confluence with the Zambesi, at the border of Barotseland. From there the group moved to two islands in the Zambesi River, Mumbeta and Mutonga. Later they settled along the banks of the Zambesi River, near the present day Katima Mulilo Rapids, and further south.

This most eastern Kavango group has a long history of journeys and of bloody conflicts within their royal clan, the Hakanyime (those of the Lion). When they were still at the Zambezi, they were living in the Mutemwa district. They are closely related to the central Barotse people. What their former group name and language were, is not known but, according to Larson, they were known in Barotseland as Hakokohu which means simply "those who came from a far



place". The earliest language and customs known to have been theirs, differ to an extent from those of the other four Kavango groups.

The Luyi chief Mwanambinyi (the Mwanambuyu or Mwanaserunda referred to earlier) reigning in about 1740, is believed to have given orders to the group to leave the country. This was because he suspected them of conspiring with other tribes who were then attempting to conquer it.

The group which were to become the Hambukushu fled downstream and settled between the Toka and Yeyi who were living southeast of Kazungula.

A clan of the Yeyi which was famous in the art of smelting copper ore had a severe dispute and split into two groups. One of the members of this Twa clan who was also believed to be able to make rain married a wife of the Hakanyime clan. Later he decided to let his son inherit the famous magical medicine so the royal clan of the Hambukushu became rainmakers and were later acknowledged as such by people from far and near. The group fled into Caprivi (south of Katima Mulilo). Later they fled again, back to Mbata and Sitoti Islands in the Zambezi, north of Katima Mulilo. On those islands the group lived mainly on a wild fruit growing there which is called Mbukushu and hence the name Hambukushu and that of their language, Thimbukushu. It is assumed that because they were a peaceful people and not good soldiers the Hambukushu preferred to live on islands for better protection.

Because they refused to pay tribute to the Luyi, the Hambukushu groups was again told to go, and they went westwards and found a new home first at Mashi in the mid-Kwandu flood plain along the southwestern border of Zambia and the southeastern border of Angola, and later at Rughara on the lower Luyana River. It is generally believed that the group which became the ancestors of the present Hambukushu stayed in the Mashi region for some sixty years, that is until the beginning of the 19th century. To this day many who live in that area and at Mashi, the so-called Vamashi, speak Thimbukushu and all the chiefs of the upper Mashi district and in Mbunda (at Ruyana and the district south of this river) were chosen from among the Hakanyime clan. There are still villages in Zambia and Eastern Angola where "refugees" from the Vakwangali, Vagciriku and Hambukushu still speak their own languages.

When arriving at Rughara the Hambukushu were known as Havamasiko which probably could mean, those who are on their way. (Gibson et al)

A party tracking elephants is said to have discovered the Kavango river, after which most of the group moved to settle on the islands in the river near present day Andara, before moving to their present area at the same time as the Vashambyu and Vagciriku.

There are other oral stories telling about the historical background of the Hambukushu.

According to one such story recorded by Fisch (Fisch M. 1983: Ethnological Manuscript), the Hambukushu after crossing the Kavango River, came across a huge eagle which could not fly very swiftly. They considered the eagle to be their god and therefore they followed it wherever it flew, until it flew across the Zambesi River. The Hambukushu then split into small groups some of which proceeded to Botswana and others to the Caprivi Strip, but some of which returned to the Kavango River and settled in their present region.

The Hambukushu chiefs:

1. Mashambo lead the Hambukushu from 1760 to 1795 without the Kavango area.
2. Mbungu the son of Dirura from 1795 to 1815 without the Kavango area.
3. Diyeve the son of Rukonga from 1815 to 1885.
4. Dimbu the son of Kapande from 1885 to 1895 in the Kavango area.
5. Diyeve the son of Kushamuna from 1895 to 1915 in the Kavango area.
6. Disho the son of Dighidhi from 1915 to 1929 in the Kavango area.
7. Ndara-Dimbu the son of Dighidhi from 1929 to 1939 in the Kavango area.
8. Disho the son of Dighidhi from 1939 to 1947 in the Kavango area.

9. Makushe the son of Kapande from 1947 to 1969 in the Kavango area.
10. Mayavero the son of Kare from 1969 to 1972 in the Kavango area.
11. Dimbare the son of Kapande from 1972 to 1983 in the Kavango area.
12. Mayavero the son of Kare again from 1983 ----- in the Kavango area.

ii) The Vagciriku:

According to the Vagciriku oral tradition and as far as memory can serve them, this group's earlier home is generally believed to be at Mashi but originally it is assumed that they might have come from the southwestern corner of present-day Tanzania. The group who included the ancestors of those who are today known as Vagciriku settled at the Kwandu River and from there it is believed that a group of hunters who were tracking a wounded elephant discovered the Kavango River.

According to one tradition, two clans, the Vakankora and Vakanyime, originated today's Vagciriku and Hambukushu

Another perspective recorded in Gciriku Orthography No.1, Windhoek, Department of National Education, 1988, p.3, traces the origin of the Vagciriku as follows:

"According to reliable sources, it is generally accepted that the Vagciriku originally dwelt at Mashi, a long, marshy stretch of Cuando (Kwandu) River, northeast of the Kavango Basin." At the upper Zambezi, not far south from the area occupied by those of the Hyena clan, settled another matrilineal clan. The name of the place where they lived was at that time called Manyo which was situated at the junction of the Loeti River. This group called themselves Vamanyo and their language, Rumanyo. When the sons of Mwanambuya pressed southwards and conquered the whole Uruyi (Barotseland), the Vamanyo fled to the western bank of the Mashi River (middle Kwandu) not far from the modern Livungu, where they remained for about 60 years. During a period of severe drought and hunger they decided to emigrate to the Kavango River, which was discovered by a hunting party when following a wounded elephant. Before coming to the Kavango River the Vamanyo are believed to have settled down for a while at Mpupa along the Kuitu River (Kuito). A female member of the Vakankora clan namely Kashivi, who became the matriarch of the Vagciriku, died at Mpupa along the Quito River. At the end of the 18th century while the Vagciriku were migrating southward they reached the confluence of the Kavango and Quito Rivers and settled at Uvara waNtjefu. That group is believed to have split into two small groups. One group is understood to have moved westward along the Kavango River and eventually settled at Uvhungu-vhungu south of the Kavango River. This group is assumed to be the forefathers of the Vashambyu.

The other group led by Shimwemwe who was Kashivi's brother settled at Muratandjira, (translated as ford) also on the southern bank of the Kavango River at the region called Rundjarara. After Shimwemwe's death Ngara the son of Kashivi led the Vagciriku and settled at the place today known as Ndonga-Linena where the Omatako Omuramba joins the Kavango River. Ngara was followed by Mulyata and Mulyata by Muduva. During Muduva's reign the Vagciriku are believed to have met on the southern bank of the Kavango River, nomadic splinters group of the Vatjaube, Vacanikwe and Vangomayi who were of the Khoikhoi group. A struggle over the region started between the Vagciriku and these groups.

During 1858 when Muduva was still the leader of the Vagciriku, he and his group were attacked by the Vakololo from Botswana. Muduva and his family are believed to have committed suicide. Many of the Vagciriku women and children were captured by the Vakololo.

Under the leadership of chief Muhera, the Vagciriku crossed the Kavango River and settled again between the Kavango and Quito Rivers at Ngurungu, where the Vagciriku are believed to have dwelt until 1910.

When chief Nyangana was leading the Vagciriku it is generally understood that he made war with his western neighbours, the Vashambyu. As the Vashambyu were

becoming stronger, chief Nyangana appealed on the Varwa from Botswana to assist him in fighting the Vashambyu. By that time the Vashambyu under the leadership of Kanyetu, were settled on an island of the Quito River called Malio. The Varwa became totally dissatisfied because they did not gain much from that war, consequently they turned on, and in such a cunning way, attacked Nyangana and his Vagciriku group. Many of the Vagciriku males were murdered by the Varwa at the place now called, after that incident, Lishora. A great number of Nyangana's army and himself were taken captive to Botswana. A year later chief Nyangana returned to his people (Vagciriku) and settled at Muhapu north of the Kavango River.

When the Roman Catholic Missionaries arrived there in 1910, Mbambo the son of Nyangana who had attended schools at the Mission Stations in Botswana, persuaded his father to allow the Missionaries to establish a Mission station in the Gciriku region. Chief Nyangana agreed and allowed the Missionaries to establish the first Mission Station in Kavango. This Mission Station, named after chief Nyangana, was established on the south bank of the Kavango River at a place called Kandenga. Later on Nyangana and his Vagciriku, migrated across the Kavango River and settled at a place known as Mamono. When Nyangana died he was succeeded by Shampapi, who later on fled across the Kavango river and settled on the north bank. This state of affairs was caused by his clashes with the Native Commissioner

at Rundu. The Commissioner, however, suggested that Shampapi's younger brother had to take over the leadership. Shashipapo who succeeded Shampapi led the Vagciriku for a long time and on 21 October 1970 he became the first Prime Minister of the Kavango Homeland.

After the death of chief Shashipapo on 16 December 1984 Sebastiaan Kamwanga succeeded him and still rules.

Again there are other and less acceptable views of the origins of these people.

According to the oral traditional history of the Vagciriku, they originated from the Vamanyo. When they arrived at the Kavango River, a dispute started between two brothers, the elder brother was Gciriku and his younger brother was Shambyu. Consequently Shambyu and his followers decided to move westward along the river and they settled in a region that he called after himself, Shambyu. The elder brother remained in the region which also was called after him, Gciriku. This view offers a solution to the names of the regions. Vashambyu would mean those who belong to Shambyu and Vagciriku those who belong to Gciriku. Against this a family name like Shambyu is nowhere to be found, although the name Gciriku did exist till in the recent times. The authors of Gciriku Orthography No. 1 conclude that "The



origin of the tribe's name, 'Gciriku', is unknown and difficult to trace."

Whatever the details it is clear that the Vagciriku first moved westward along the Kavango River till they reached Rundjarara. From there they started moving eastward to establish or to mark the region today called Gciriku.

Dr Budack reports that the older people among the Vashambyu and Vagciriku, some of whom passed away within the last four to five years and some who are still living, still spoke or speak Rumanyo which is a relatively slow and tonal language.

#### The Chiefs of the Vagciriku:

1. Chief Shimwemwe led the Vagciriku from 1785 to 1805 and he settled at Mpupa along the Quito River in Angola and later on at Rundjarara south of the Kavango River.
2. Chief Ngara led the Vagciriku from 1805 to 1812 at Ndonga-Linena east of Rundjarara and also south of the Kavango River.
3. Chief Mulyata led the Vagciriku from 1812 to 1838 at Ngumbo east of Ndonga-Linena and also south of the Kavango River.

4. Chief Nandundu led the Vagciriku from 1838 to 1839 also at Ngumbo.
5. Chief Muduva led the Vagciriku from 1839 to 1858 at Ngumbo.
6. Chief Muhera led the Vagciriku from 1861 to 1866 at Ngurungu north of the Kavango River.
7. Chief Nyangana led the Vagciriku from 1866 to 1924 first at Muhapu north of the Kavango River and later on at Mamono south of the Kavango River.
8. Chief Shampapi led the Vagciriku from 1924 to 1944 at Kadedere south of the Kavango River. When chief Shampapi fled across the Kavango River he continued to be the chief of the Vagciriku who dwelt on the northern bank of the Kavango River which became part of Angola during colonization.
9. Chief Shashipapo led the Vagciriku for forty years, 1944 to 1985 at Ndiyona south of the river.
10. Chief Kamwanga, the current chief, started leading the Vagciriku as from January 1985, at Mamono west of Ndiyona also south of the Kavango River.

iii) The Vashambyu:

As in the case of the other four tribes of the Kavango area, there are differing views of the historical background of Vashambyu.

McGurk writing on the history of Vashambyu, states as follows:

"According to their oral traditions, the Sambyu were originally hunters and gatherers living in the vicinity of Mashi (Kwandu) River in Southwestern Zambia" (Gibson et al. 1981 p. 99).

The Vashambyu were led by three ancient chiefs. Kapinga led them while they were at Mashi and he also is generally accepted to be the one who led them on their further migration to the Kavango River. His brother, Nyumba, and later on his sister, Mushinga, could have lead the Vashambyu in the last stage of their migration.

This last stage began while they were at Mashi, when a group of their hunters traced a wounded elephant till they arrived at the Kavango River, which they found to be unoccupied. On their return to Mashi they informed chief Kapinga and the Vashambyu tribe about the new river, subsequently the chief and his people migrated to the Kavango.

At which place they came to the Kavango River is not mentioned. Kapinga and the Vashambyu moved westward along the Kavango river and met the Vambunza chief at Mupini. The Vambunza chief was friendly and allowed them to buy a valley in which Kapinga settled with his Vashambyu. This region later on became known as Shikondo which means, at the end, the end of the Mbunza region. While dwelling in this valley Kapinga and his people believed themselves to have been insulted by the Vambunza Chief, consequently Kapinga and his group decided to move eastward along the Kavango River and settled at Uvhungu-vungu which is also on the south bank of the Kavango River.

Although Kapinga and his people brought seed grain and stock with them from Mashi, at Uvungu-vungu they lived solely by hunting, fishing and gathering. McGurk says "All informants agree that except for Bushmen who roamed along the river as well as in the arid country away from it, the Sambyu were at that time the only inhabitants in this region along the Okavango which they still occupy. (Gibson et al p.99) Kapingas' brother, Nyumba, who succeeded him, is believed to be the one who started the encouragement of agriculture.

After two years Nyumba was succeeded by his sister Mushinga, and she is generally believed to have been a good chief until her death, though she became blind later on. During her reign the Vashambyu royal residence was moved from Uvungu-vungu, eastward along

the Kavango River to Gove which is on the south bank of this river.

Mushinga's daughter, Kandimba, succeeded her mother, and she decided later on to move the Vashambyu royal residence across the Kavango river and settled on the northern bank of the Kavango River. During Kandimba's reign Vashambyu increased in number and became strong.

Fearing an attack of the Germans, Kanyetu, the younger son of Kandimba, who was leading the Vashambyu at that time settled on an island of the Quito river. The Lozi chief, Liwaneka, appealed to Kanyetu to assist him during the 1884 rebellion in Zambia. Kanyetu and his fighters were successful in repressing and beating the rebels, so Liwaneka rewarded Kanyetu with a part of Urui, a region between Zambia and Angola. After a few years, Kanyetu came back to the Kavango River and settled down on the northern bank at Shiyana, which place he later abandoned and settled on the island Malio, which situated in the Quito river.

Nyangana, the chief of the Vagciriku, fearing the rise of Kanyetu, appealed to the Varwa from Botswana to attack Kanyetu at Malio. The attack which is believed to have taken a few days was successful. Kanyetu probably committed suicide.

Kandimba was then succeeded by her eldest son Mbambangandu I. sometimes called Shinguruve, who

settled on the northern bank of the Kavango River at a place called Mangarara. In 1903 the Vashambyu led by Mbambangandu I. returned into Angola and settled on the banks of the Lumuna River, where Mbambangandu I. and his successor, Sharunguro died.

In 1916 Chief Ndango led the Vashambyu back to the Kavango area where he died in 1924. The Native Commissioner at Rundu was not in favour of Ndango's younger nephew Mbambangandu II. being the chief of the Vashambyu, so when later, Mbambangandu II. became blind, his younger niece, Mwengere, who was still at Uruyi, was called to come to the Kavango River to take over leadership of the Vashambyu.

#### The Chiefs of the Vashambyu:

NB: According to a table written in the German language, Nyumba should be succeeded by Kapinga but according to the tradition Kapinga was succeeded by Nyumba. This listing will follow the traditional order.

1. Chief Kapinga, whose mother was Mwalye and his father was Mugove, led the Vashambyu from 1803 to 1815 at Sikondo near Mupini and later on at Uvungu-vungu on the south bank of the Kavango River.
2. Nyumba whose mother was Rukunde led the Vashambyu from 1815 to 1820 at Uvungu-vungu.

3. Mushinga the daughter of Kapande (mother) and Munkanda (father) led the Vashambyu from 1820 to 1858 at Gove on the south bank of the Kavango River.
4. Kandimba the daughter of Mushinga (mother) and Kapumburu (father) led the Vashambyu from 1859 to 1874 at Mangarara on the north bank of the Kavango.
5. Shinguruve the son of Kandimba (mother) and Shimbenda (father) led the Vashambyu from 1874 to 1909 at Mangarara on the north bank of the Kavango River.
6. Ndango the son of Mushinga (mother) and Kakinyara (father) led the Vashambyu from 1916 to 1924 at Kayengona on the south bank of the Kavango.
7. Mbambangandu II, son of Nashira (mother) and Kakuru (father) led the Vashambyu from 1924 to 1940 at Gove on the south bank of the Kavango.
8. Mwengere the daughter of Mbava (mother) and Mukosho (father) led the Vashambyu from 1940 to 1986 at Kayengona on the south bank of the Kavango.
9. Haininga the son of Nankali (mother) and Haininga (father) led the Vashambyu from 1986 to 1988 at Kayengona.

10. Matumbo the daughter of Nankali (mother) and Libebe (father) started leading the Vashambyu on 1989-05-19 at Kayengona.

iv) The Vambunza:

McGurk (Gibson et al p. 83) reports her sources as follows:

"Forg thinks the Mbundza lived at one time in the Mashi region of the Kwandu River, but together with Bruwer he believed that at an earlier time they lived in the lakes region of central Africa and cites Mbundza traditions in support of this hypothesis. In more recent times the location of Mbundza royal graves, which can be traced successively from west to east, supports a Mbundza claim that they once lived farther to the west and migrated down the Okavango River to their present location."

The ancestors of the Vambunza and Vakwangali, it is generally accepted, were settled for a few decades in Mashi before they migrated to the Kavango River. Two sisters, Mate and Kapango, were the leaders of what at that time was one group, while they migrated southward from Mashi, until they reached the northern bank of the Kavango River in approximately 1861.



According to Kampungu, who recorded their legends, this group migrated together with the Vagciriku and the Vashambyu from Mashi while all the groups were together relatively small. Arriving at the Kavango River they moved westward. Kampungu says that all the groups called themselves by the common name Vamashi, that is, people from Mashi.

While the migration was under way the ancestors of the Vambunza and Vakwangali were delayed for a while on an island in the Kavango River at the region which today is Gciriku area, namely, Shighuru (anthill) near the present border between Gciriku and Shambyu. The delay is believed to have been caused by a Mukwangali woman who was long in labour with the birth of her baby. When the baby arrived this group followed the Vagciriku and Vashambyu who had moved ahead.

Later on the Vambunza and the Vakwangali ancestors overtook the Vagciriku and Vashambyu. While moving westward the Vambunza and the Vakwangali ancestors are believed to have met the Handa and the Vankumbi (Ovambo groups) who were then moving eastward. The Vambunza and the Vakwangali group retired and moved eastward and settled in their present area.

Accounts received personally from older members of the two tribes support what Kampungu had to say as far as the origin of the Vambunza and Vakwangali is concerned. They believe that the Vambunza and Vakwangali were originally one group.

Their chiefs are generally accepted to be the descendants of the two sisters Mate and Kapango.

Legend explains how the group split into two:

From the Kwandu region the two sisters and their followers migrated together to the Kavango River. The dispute which caused the split between the two sisters and their followers is reported to have been as follows: Kapango, who led the faction who were to become the Vambunza had no cattle at that time, whereas Mate's group, who would become the Vakwangali, possessed cattle. A dispute started over the cattle and the sisters and their followers split. The Vambunza occupied the present day Mbunza while the Vakwangali occupied the Ukwangali region. Inter-marriage and intrigue are believed to have continued between the royal houses of the Vambunza and Vakwangali long after.

According to the recorded history, especially that of Paiva Couceiro, a Portuguese, who went through Mbunza region in 1870, the Vambunza occupied exclusively the Angolan, that is the northern bank. The region which is now known as Mbunza on the southern bank was unoccupied. According to Paiva's observation, the land of the Vambunza extended for a distance of 46 km along the north bank of the Kavango River. It is generally accepted that the Vambunza moved across the Kavango River to settle on the south bank in course of the first decades of the 20th century.

The matrilineal clans within the Vambunza and Vakwangali are identical having a greater number than the other three tribes.

#### The Chiefs of the Vambunza:

The chieftainship in the history of the Vambunza is, unlike the other groups, not easy to trace. It is not known who led them after the death of Kapango who, according to tradition, led the Vambunza from 1880 until 1890. Nampadi became chief in 1903 but it is not known for how long. Karupu is believed to have followed Nampadi directly and Karupu was followed by Kasiki who was followed by Napemba, the mother of the present day leader of the Vambunza, whose name is Leevi Hakusembe.

#### v) The Vakwangali

The Vakwangali tribe occupy the westernmost region bordering on the Ovambo. The region is called Ukwangali. The language, Rukwangali, has certain similarities with some Ovambo languages, such as Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga. This fact may be attributed to the invasions of Ukwangali by the Ovambos. The Ukwangali region is, of course, more exposed to

the Ovambos than the other four regions within the Kavango area.

It seems as though, when the original group split into the Vambunza and the Vakwangali, the Vakwangali entered a period of stress and this was caused both by the Ovambo invasions and by internal struggles within the royal family, for chieftainship.

According to tradition a female chief, Mate I, led the Vakwangali into becoming a separate group as they arrived in the present area. The Vakwangali tribe dwelt on the north side of the Kavango River. The next remembered chief is Muntenda who was a matrilineal grandson of Mate I. During the Chieftainships of Muntenda, Muha, Nankali and Simbara, there was relative calm among the Vakwangali.

When Mate II succeeded Simbara, the Ovambo tribe known as Vakwanyama, invaded the Ukwangali region and it is said that Mate II and her family were killed. After that a struggle started between Kapango and Siremo of the royal line for leadership. Kapango, known in tradition as Kapango II, retreated and moved away into Angola with her children.

From deep within Angola, Kapango II's sons sought help from the Vakwanyama and as a combined group they attacked the village of Siremo. After Siremo's defeat and death, the Vakwanyama took a royal girl, Nasira, and two royal boys, Sikongo and Mipasi captive to Ukwanyama. In Ovambo, Nasira is said to have been married to several men and she gave birth

to various children. Among these children was a daughter Mpande and two boys Siremo II and Himarwa, who were all to become leaders of the Vakwangali tribe.

When Mpande became the leader, chaos within the Vakwangali decreased to an extent but after her death, when her brother Himarwa became the leader, chaos and internal struggle within the Vakwangali royal family started again. Consequently some of Nasira's descendants including Sirongo and Kandjimi fled away deep into Angola and settled at Luenge River.

When white administration took over the whole of Namibia and when the Roman Catholic Missionaries established mission stations along the south bank of the Kavango River, the Vakwangali started to settle permanently on the south side of the River.

The Vakwangali on the south side of the river were ruled by the following succession of chiefs: Mbuna, Kandjimi, Mbuna, Kanuni, Sivhute, Kanuni, Mbandu, Kandjimi Murangi. Sitentu Mpasi who became chief in recent years, is still leading the Vakwangali on the south side of the Kavango River.

Many Vakwangali remained north of the river and when this became a national boundary they developed their own line of chiefs.

All the five above mentioned Kavango groups lived on the south bank of the Kavango River, that is, in present day Namibia from 1800 to 1853. None of them dared to live on the northern bank because of the threat of slave traders.

During the years when the Namas moved from the south to invade Ovamboland, the four Kavango groups, fearful of being attacked by the Namas, decided to move their villages to the northern bank of the Kavango River. It is said that the only chief who ignored that threat and remained on the south bank, Muduva of the Vagciriku, was actually attacked and overwhelmed in 1858, not by the Namas, but by the Kololo who had their headquarters at Linyati in the Caprivi.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE LIFESTYLE AND BELIEFS OF THE VAKAVANGO

##### Section I - Lifestyle of the Vakavango

That which follows which is not specifically directed, applies to the whole Kavango people. In so far as there is a focus in our concern it is with the easternmost groups, for when we come to consider the diffusion of the Tjakova myth cycle it will be seen that this is the significant area.

Similarly, the discussion will attempt to summarize the important ideas but certain more significant facts will have to be described in greater detail. The reasons for the imbalance will become clear during the analysis of the myth.

##### i) Social Structure

The social structure of the Kavango People has been rapidly disintegrating, especially within the last 15 years. The clan system and matrilineal descent bound them together.

The communal lifestyle is also disintegrating at the hands of an agrarian lifestyle. Many people in the Kavango Area now have their own farms and no longer live together but in nuclear families.

The social structure of the Kavango people in the past may be called "sacramental social structure". It was the strongest link between the Kavango people and nature. First of all man identified himself with something in the natural order and in trying to understand that thing came also to an understanding of himself. Such identification with animals, birds, reptiles and fishes built strong relationships between the whole Kavango people and their context. Together they were a microcosm.

The social structure of the Kavango People in the past, was based on matrilineal segmentary organization in which, according to McGurk and Gibson, "six levels of segmentation are discernible: Monogamous and polygamous families, extended families, genealogically defined lineages, localized sub-clans, dispersed clans, and phratries of linked clans." (Gibson et al p. 61).

The social structure within the Kavango People was based on clans, which had the names of animals, birds, reptiles and insects, or significant occupations. How this started cannot be traced.



The regions of the five tribes within the Kavango area were divided into smaller regions consisting of a number of villages (mandi) (dimukunda) and each smaller region had its own headman who was assisted by a group of older men (matimbi).

### Descent within the Kavango People

Matrilineal lineages were the determinant within the clans. There were also non-localized matrilineal clans (likoro). This was the root of the problem, discussed in relation to the origin of the Hambukushu, in the dispute between the Hakangondo and Hakanyime, which were divided into sub-matrilineages (lira).

For example two sisters of the buffalo clans may have children. All their children are also buffaloes and consider themselves to be brothers and sisters, but one group from the one sister and another from the other. The father, if he belongs to another clan than that of his wife, will never be a relative to his own children. If he marries a distant member of the clan with the same name, he is automatically a relative to his own children and his wife. All the sisters and brothers of the father are considered to be mothers and fathers.

Again, the head of a kraal will be a man who belongs to a certain clan. Such a man's brothers, sisters and the children of his sisters, as well as the children of his

mother's sisters and the brothers of his mother, and all those related to them maternally belong to the same clan.

The children of a brother are called by his sister's children (viro, vipwa, yipwa) which means they with whom we can make jokes or even marry. They will probably belong to two or more different clans. The sister to the mother is called by the children, mother, but a brother to the mother is called by the children, uncle.

In those days children of a sister had more authority in claiming the right to inherit things possessed by a deceased brother of their mother than the children of that man because they belong to the same clan, and he is their proper relative because only matrilineal relatives were considered true relatives.

Members of the various clans with the same name over the whole Kavango area considered themselves to be related to one another and this gave them a strong sense of unity.

The Vagciriku and Vashambyu have the same clans despite different pronunciations. The Hambukushu, Vambunza and Vakwangali have certain clans which the other groups do not have. All five Kavango tribes have the following clans in common: those of the lion, those of the elephant, those of the buffalo, and those of the cattle. The Vakwangali, Vambunza, Vashambyu and Vagciriku have the following clans in common: those of the hyena, those of the lion, those of

the elephant, those of the hawk, those of the cattle, those who hungered, and those of the frog.

The clans within the Hambukushu tribe:

1. Hakanyime (those of the Lion) which is the royal clan. They are not visible to an outsider, but it is said that there are two sub-clans, Those of the Lion proper (Hakanyime vene-vene), who can become chiefs, and Those of the Lion ordinary (Hakanyime tighona), who cannot.
2. Hakambara (those of the Elephant)
3. Hakamvhura (the Rainmakers)
4. Hakangondo (the Copper-workers)
5. Hakasheya (those of the Dog or Donkey)
6. Hakanyatji (those of the Buffalo)
7. Hakahembe (those of the Calf)\*
8. Hakathimu (those of the Cattle)

\* It has been suggested that this is not well translated, that the reference is not to calf but to any plant eating game which would overlap with elephant as well as buffalo, cattle and donkey.

The clans within the Vagciriku tribe:

1. Vakafuma (those of the Giant Frog or Toad).  
The clan from which all chiefs come. Again they are not visible to an outsider, but it is said that there are Those of the Frog proper (Vakafuma vene-vene), who can become chiefs, and Those of the Frog ordinary (Vakafuma tighona), who cannot.
2. Vakanyashi (those of the Buffalo)

3. Vakanyime (those of the Lion)
4. Vakankora (those who Hungered or of the Parrot)
5. Vakayovhu (those of the Elephant)
6. Vakashipika (those of the Hyena)
7. Vakangombe (those of the Cattle)
8. Vakandjadi (those of the Falcon or Hawk)

The clans within the Vashambyu tribe:

1. Vakwankora (those who Hungered)

The clan from which all chiefs come. They are not visible to an outsider, but here also it is said that there are two sub-clans, Those who hungered proper (Vakwankora vene-vene), who can become chiefs, and those who hungered ordinary (Vakwankora tighona), who cannot.

2. Vakwandjadi (those of the Hawk or Falcon)
3. Vakwandjovhu (those of the Elephant)
4. Vakwanyatji (those of the Buffalo)
5. Vakwafuma (those of the Giant Frog or Toad)
6. Vakwanyime (those of the Lion)
7. Vakwangombe (those of the Cattle)
8. Vakwashipika (those of the Hyena)

The royal clans of the Vashambyu and the Vagciriku consider themselves to be one group for all that they have different names. The root of this is not known to the current members.

The clans within the Vambunza and Vakwangali are the same, and are more than the other three tribes have.

Their main clans are:

1. Vakwasipika (those of the Hyena)

This clan is the royal clan within both groups, but the clan is divided in two. There is the Vakwasipika (veve-vene), that is, Those of the Hyena (proper). Only members of this group can become chiefs. Then there is the Vakwasipika (sigona), that is, Those of the Hyena (ordinary). It is said that this group were once the servants of royal families and adopted the royal clan name. They cannot, therefore, become chiefs. The other groups, however, also have limits set within the royal clan about who may become chief.

2. Vakwandumbe or Vakwahefu (those of the Eland).

3. Vakwanyime (those of the Lion)

4. Vakwanzovhu (those of the Elephant)

5. Vakwanyatji (those of the Buffalo)

There are two sub-groups in this clan, the Vakwanyatji Vomoruputa (vakwanyatji vomo ruputa = those of the buffalo of the bushes), and the Vakwanyatji Vomoyiteva (vakwanyatji vomo yiteva = those of the buffalo of the bamboos). The former refers to the buffalo the animal, the latter to a type of small fish, having the same name, which live within the bamboos in the rivers.

6. Vakwanzadi (those of the Hawk or Falcon)

7. Vakwangandu (those of the Crocodile)

8. Vakwangombe (those of the Cattle)

This clan also has some sub-divisions. They are the Vakwangombe Vatupundu (Those of the Cattle of the Berry Eaters) and the Vakwangombe Vanzwagara (Those of the Cattle of the Pheasants)

It is said that the Vakwangombe clan as a whole travelled together. Later on they split into two groups. One group moved westward but into the interior and depended a great deal on berries for food. Hence they became known as the Vakwangombe Vatupundu. Another group moved westward but near the river and snared the type of tropical pheasants that are called Nzwagara. They became the Vakwangombe Vazwagara. This sub-clan of the Vakwangombe are mainly concentrated in the region of Ukwangali called Nzinze.

9. Vakwambahu (those of the Locust)
10. Vakwankora (those of the Hunger)
11. Vakwafuma (those of the Frog).

There are 11 clans, therefore, but in addition within the Vakwasipika there are two sub-clans as also with the Vakwangombe and the Vakwanyatji.

## ii) The Subsistence Economy

The Kavango people are still under-developed and most of the older people are illiterate or less than literate and still traditionally rooted in a subsistence culture.

They have believed in the principle of communality which meant that every Kavango member had equal access and equal rights to the wild games, birds, fish, fruit, herbs, grasses

and timber within the area. Nowadays such feelings of communality are hampered by the concepts of the agrarian system.

In the Kavango activities have been seasonal. People were not busy with hunting, fishing and collecting or gathering through the whole year. From September to November, which is usually a dry season, they kept themselves busy doing domestic work. The men especially building new huts or repairing the old ones. People made mats and iron tools, or they enlarged or cleared their agricultural fields to prepare for the first rain in mid-November or December, after which they started ploughing and planting.

Agriculture, during years of adequate rain was the priority of the Kavango people. After agriculture came cattle-raising. Beyond these, subsistence depended upon fishing, hunting, fowling, snaring and gathering.

The staple diet in earlier times as now, consisted of millet or maize meal porridge with meat, fish, or oil of peanuts or certain wild nuts, spinach made of wild vegetables. The Kavango people customarily eat three times a day.

From millet, maize or African corn meal, the Kavango people make their traditional drinks, such as "shikundu" which can also be drunk by children and their own traditional beer they call "marovhu"; "mutoho", "muheturo", "kamadwira". In

the last three to four decades they have started to make beer they call "mundevere", which is a mixture of stamped millet with sugar and water. From wild fruits they make a traditional distilled liquor they call "kashipembe".

#### Agriculture:

In good years ploughing starts in early or mid-November and continues until the end of January or even mid-February. They did and still do, plant grains such as millet (mahangu); African corn (vilya); African sugar cane (njova); maize (lipungu).

During the rainy season they also traditionally plant: beans (makunde); peanuts (ndongo); watermelons (katjama); sweetpotatoes (kawandja); great ground beans (ngomene); pumpkins (malyangwa) and a variety of less popular things.

#### Cattle-raising:

Next in importance after agriculture came cattle-raising. Kavango people rarely killed their cattle simply for food purposes, but for sacrifice to their ancestors and for rain. Meat was sufficient, because many different types of game from the biggest to the smallest, were abundant near their villages. Nowadays



the Kavango people kill their cattle to sell the meat in order to buy other necessities.

#### Other Domestic Animals:

The Kavango people, in addition to cattle, kept herds of goats, and pigs, and chickens. In the course of times they came also to have horses, donkeys, dogs and cats and even pigeons. Nowadays, there are some families who do not have any one of the above.

#### Hunting, Trapping, Snaring and Fowling:

Today hunting during certain seasons and hunting of certain species of wild game is controlled by the laws of the Department of Nature Conservation, and meat is obtained mainly from slaughtered cattle, goats, chickens. Although there is still illegal hunting. In earlier times however, hunting, whether by a group or individually, was very important in the life of the Kavango people and was usually preceded by certain ritual ceremonies. It was, however, an unconservationist life-style. As many animals as could be killed on a hunt, were killed, with no thought of the morrow nor for natural balances.

Traditionally hunting of big game like elephants, kudu, giraffes, gnus, elands, hippopotami and zebras, as well

as other antelopes was done exclusively by men. Hunting of small mammals like hares and small carnivores was carried out by boys using dogs, bows and arrows or small spears. Men used iron tipped spears, assagais and bows and arrows, traditional axes (mbo), traditional knives (mbere), pangas (marufuro) and later on also guns. Even if hunting was done individually, the transportation of the killed animal or animals to the villages was done communally. Meat was also communally divided.

Besides hunting, meat was also obtained by means of trapping, snaring and fowling. The smaller boys snared birds and small animals on the periphery of the agricultural fields. Among Kavango people most birds are considered edible with the exception of birds of prey, and those which scavenge on other birds, small mammal, reptiles, certain insects and amphibia.

#### Fishing:

Fishing throughout the Kavango, has traditionally been done by all ages and both sexes. Sometimes in groups, sometimes individually. The most favourable season for fishing was as from September to December when the river and small lakes and waterpools along the river became most accessible. People used fishspears (dimusho), fish harpoons (ngumba), different sorts of fishing baskets (vikuku, vididi, marunkinda, dimuduva,

mashasha) and even certain poisons (rushungu), to poison the water of a small lake or waterpool in order to kill the fish. Here the unconservationist life-style was very clear, for the procedure killed all the fish in a pool on a single day.

#### Gathering:

The Kavango people gathered a large variety of edible roots (Mwimbo, ngandu, dimuvovoghona, macava, mbutu), reptiles, eggs, caterpillars, nuts, fruit, vegetable foods to supplement their daily diet. Gathering or collecting was always done on a large scale especially during the years of poor harvest or drought. Edible insects and honey were collected within the flood-plain containing anthills, hollow trees and in the forests, as well as on the sand-belt. Plants used as medicines and charms were also collected.

The lack of conservation probably had more effect here than in the case of living creatures who could relocate and be replenished from other areas. It was the practice of those who gathered, from a fruit bearing tree for example, to fill baskets to take back to the village, and then to eat everything else from the tree. It left nothing for seed and nothing for the birds who would have served to scatter the seed. Fruit bearing trees could even be cut down for other purposes.

Mertens summarizes the above as follows:

"The Kavango people in their separate tribal areas along the river, subsist by virtue of both horticulture and animal husbandry. The women, using the hoe, till the fields. They gather the crops. The men tend the animals. In the forests bordering the river there are a great variety of fruit-bearing trees. In the veld there are flying ants (ntjwa), luscious caterpillars (maghungu), locusts (limbonde), all containing a rich assortment of fats, proteins and carbohydrates. Collecting this bounty as well as hunting and fishing, provides the Kavango people with the kind of diet modern industrial societies would package expensively and sell as health foods." (Mertens : introduction).

### iii) The Material Culture of the Kavango People:

#### Villages:

Villages consist of various huts made of wood or sticks with grass on the roofs. Round or square, the walls are made of wood or stick, thickly covered with mud from anthills or the flood-plain. Sometimes walls are made simply of sticks and bamboos.

#### Clothes:

Nowadays most of the Kavango people dress in western produced clothing. Traditionally men dressed in aprons

of cured cow's stomach, kudu, duiker, leopard and other wildcat skins which they had scraped clean. Such aprons were held in place by a belt of cured ox-hide. Some wore a small cured skin behind. Sandals locally made of rawhide, which could be cowhide, were worn by males when they were travelling or working in the bush. Women on the other hand never wore sandals. Women wore front and rear aprons made of cured cow's stomach, duiker or goat's skin. Two belts were worn to keep these aprons in place. A broad girdle of from 10 to 12 strings of ostrich egg-shell beads were also worn by females.

#### Ornaments and Tools

Ornaments and tools of different types were made of iron and copper. During interviews it became clear that the Kavango people knew how to smelt copper and iron ores. The process of smelting iron is the same over the whole Kavango area. Iron smelting was a very specialized profession which conferred higher status on those with such special knowledge. The blacksmiths who manufactured iron objects also became highly respected within their tribal communities.

Preparation for the smelting process began with the selection of a suitable spot probably on a flat anthill, then a number of furrows approximately four feet long and six inches wide were dug out of the

anthill soil. The distance between these furrows was about two inches. When the digging process was completed, the first furrow was filled with charcoal whereas the second one was filled with iron ore. This pattern was repeated. The exact number of furrows they dug could not be determined from those who were interviewed. One group said four furrows and the others said six. The furrows to contain charcoals were twice as deep as those to contain iron ore. Two or more bellows were used to keep the charcoal burning. Above the charcoal and iron ore in each furrow they placed a further layer of charcoal and closed the whole by smearing wet anthill soil over it.

Usually the bellows men started their blowing in the evening and this process continued for the whole night. To protect the bellows men from the scorching heat, their bodies were also smeared with wet anthill soil. By the next morning the iron ore had smelted together. After hammering the residue into smaller pieces they placed the pieces in a hole which they again covered with a layer of charcoal and smeared wet anthill soil. Blowing started again and it is said that this process continues until a hissing sound, like that of a snake, was heard within the burning charcoals. This was the signal that the iron ore had released the iron. Then they removed it from fire and hammered it, and again put it in the fire. This process continued until a pure bar of iron was obtained for the manufacture of the various iron tools that the Kavango people used.

iv) Kavango traditional literature:

African people in general are well known for their oral literature passed from one generation to the other.

This tradition was also very strongly rooted within the Kavango people, who sought to communicate the wisdoms of the group to the youngsters by means of their folk tales, riddles, proverbs and epic tales. Such stories were mostly accompanied by refrains which were sung by all who were around the fire where the story was being told. Recounting usually took place after supper till midnight. It is now a rapidly dying custom.

Section II - Beliefs of the Vakavango

Our concern in this section is with the beliefs of the Kavango people before Christianity entered upon the scene in the persons of the first Catholic Missionaries. Today many have given up the Christian faith for a secular existence, others have returned to some aspects of the faith of their fathers. Throughout this "Christian" century however there have been places where the old ways remained largely undisturbed until the advent of the current military conflict. The practice of regularly telling the traditional tales of the ancestors maintained both traditional beliefs and social values. We begin with what a missionary recorded,

soon after they arrived, concerning the concept of god that they found among the Vakavango.

Father Wüst, a Roman Catholic priest at Andara during the earliest years of the Mission there, wrote as follows: "Je mehr die missionswissenschaftliche Forschung in Afrika vorschreitet, desto zahlreicher werden auch die Zeuchnisse dafür, dass die schwarzen Völker dieses so lange verschlossenen Erdteils mehr Kenntnisse von Gott und übersinnlichen Dingen haben, als man in früheren Zeiten annahm." (Pater Wüst, J. 1914 -1938 : Mbukushu Ethnologische Beobachtungen. Manuskript Nr. I, p.1 Andara)

The five tribes knew only one god. In general they called him Karunga (Vakwangali, Vambunza, Vashambyu and Vagciriku). The Hambukushu called him, Nyambi. In addressing God the Supreme being, rather than speaking about him, that is in invocations and sacrifices, the Vashambyu and Vagciriku also used the name Nyambi in place of Karunga.

This deity is conceived as having the character of one who punishes people for offences. He is invisible but may reveal himself to people in dreams. His place is in the heaven, which is conceived as a large land, where God sometimes remains indifferent toward the happenings on earth, especially to matters of minor importance.



This summary statement is supported by what chief Nyangana of the Vagciriku is reported to have said to Father Josef Gothardt who became later on Bishop of the Northern Vicariate, concerning the beliefs of his forbears. In free translation from the German, chief Nyangana said as follows:

- 1) We know about God but he is invisible.
- 2) He is in heaven, as our parents told us, but he doesn't like us. If he liked us he would come down to visit us, as we visit those whom we like.
- 3) Our parents happened to know about God from our grandparents who also had not seen him but he is there.  
(Bierfert, A, 1938, P.25).

In general this god is believed to have the ability to know what people think, he can see and hear everything. Human souls are in stock in heaven and God gives souls to people at the birth of their human host-body, but after death the soul returns to its original place in heaven. Animals, however, lack souls.

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The people believe that in spite of his displeasure, God continues to reveal himself to them by means of dreams, illness, or a death within a family. God governs the universe (udjuni) therefore he is held responsible for death. For the death of disabled, old or helpless persons, when people say that God has taken him or her back to heaven. For the death of a newly born baby or any baby in

general, when they say that "Karunga ana tu komaghukita", God temporarily offered the baby to us but then the offer was withdrawn. The deaths of babies are sometimes connected to the bad work of witches. Sudden death of normal healthy persons was normally blamed on the witches or sorcerers, and the witchcraft was of a specially powerful kind called "urodi wa likiti" which means witchcraft obtained from an ogre, gobbling or giant. If the circumstances were appropriate, however, they might say that God had punished the family in question because of some misbehaviour.

While the traditional belief of the Kavango people was that there was one supreme being who created them and everything else on earth, there are certain myths which make reference to an unnamed son of god. Their origin is unknown, and they do not seem to have relevance to our purpose so they will not be dealt with here.

Likewise there is now belief in a satanic being. The author believes that this should be attributed to influence from those neighbouring countries which came first into contact with Christianity, that is Zambia, Botswana and Angola. Concepts vary, but some of the names of this "being" suggest borrowing from European usage. He is known within the Hambukushu as "Shadipinyi", within the Vagciriku as "Mudyaboli", within the Vambunza and Vakwangali as "Gwiya Mpana".

There has been considerable interchange in the names for the supreme being. Karunga, is not only to be found among the Kavango people. The Herero though they have another name for God, namely Mukuru, use it, and Kalunga is used among the Ovambo. Kalunga or Shuku are among the Angolans especially the Hawiko. The Vashambyu sometimes use the name Shuku, which they adopted from the Hawiko, but it is rare.

The name Nyambi for God, common among the Hambukushu, and used in addressing God among the Vagciriku and Vashambyu, or the root in this name, is widely spread. It is to be found among the Barotse along the Zambezi River, and among the Hawiko. Among people in the Congo and Loango, Nzambi is used; among the Mpongwe in Gabun, Anyambe; among the Fan of the forest of Gabun, Nzame; among the population of Luanda and the central part of Angola, Mukulu-Nzambi.

Because of the widespread use of the word Nyambi, or the root in the word, in this part of Africa, earlier researchers came to the conclusion that this name could be derived from the verb "-amba" which means "say or speak". In Rushambyu and Rugciriku, for example, and sometimes in Thimbukushu "kughamba" which means to speak. However, the author differs with that derivation and considers that the name Nyambi is more likely to be derived from the verb "-umba" which means to make, to create, to give shape to, etc. In Rushambyu and Rugciriku, for example, "kughumba" means to create or to make.

There are two related words in these languages that must be distinguished. The difference between "kughumba" and "kughunga" is that the former is used of works of creation that are beyond being performed by mankind, for example, "Karunga gha ghumba liwiru na livhu" would translate "God created heaven and earth." The latter, however, is used only of the creation of living souls. So if one were translating Genesis 2:7, kughumba could be used for the act of creation in which God formed man of the dust of the ground, but kughunga would have to be used if "create" was being used to describe the act, for example, "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life", which made him "a living soul". Life or the life soul (rutu) which mankind shares with other living things comes to an end at death, of its creation kughumba would be used. The soul that only mankind has is called monyo, it survives death, and of its creation kughunga would be used.

The name Karunga which is also widespread, could, according to the earlier researchers, be derived from the verb "kutunga". Kutunga means to build. However, the author sees another possibility : The name Karunga could be derived from the verb "kurunga" which means to mix. The verb mix is here to be understood as the mixing of clay or mud or more recently concrete, from which process one may make or create something. Another possibility is the verb "kughunga" itself, but that is used only in relation to God anyway. It is more likely that both derive from Kutunga.

One can see the process by analogy in other words. For example "kutjanga" to write, became "kamutjangi" for secretary; "kupilika or kupirika" to reverse (something), becomes "kapisirika" for one who turns things around; "kupangura" to judge, becomes "kapangura" one who judges; "kuyupura" to make a path, becomes "kayupura" one who wears a track; etc. The name Kapisirika is sometimes given to a person who was born feet first.

Whether the god was primarily one who spoke, perhaps decreed, or one who created, it is practically certain that the distinction between creating life and creating an immortal soul existed in the language prior to any Christian influence.

The Kavango people knew only one god whom they believed had created them. Their first ancestors, it is generally believed, were once in heaven together with God. How their ancestors came on earth is explained by the myth of "Liwe lya Nkumbi" which the author translates as "the stone of Nkumbi". This "Liwe lya Nkumbi" is known as "Tschodilo Mountain" which is situated in a desertlike part of western Botswana, approximately 100 km south of Andara, 50 km south of the border. The myth may be briefly stated as follows:

Once upon a time God created men and animals. The earth was unoccupied by men, animals, reptiles, birds etc. All these were together with God in heaven. One

morning God fixed a very long and thick rope in heaven and lowered it until it touched the top of the "Liwe Iya Nkumbi". That morning God gave orders to men, animals, birds, reptiles and fishes to go down to the earth and explore it. In the evening everything returned back into heaven and told God what they have seen on earth.

From here opinions differ one group saying that:

this took place every morning till the rope became very old, and that while men, animals, birds, reptiles, fishes, and insects were on earth the old and worn rope broke off, and from that day the Kavango people, animals, reptiles, birds, fishes and insects started to spread on earth.

The other group said that if this were the case, God could easily make another rope in order that his creatures could return to the heaven. This group said that:

One day when everything returned from the habitual visit on earth, God's wife became inquisitive, and asked God to allow her the next morning to go down on earth together with men, animals, birds, reptiles, fishes and insects. God instructed one of the men whom He trusted, to guard his wife during the exploration outing upon earth. The next morning everything happened as it was arranged. Unfortunately when they were on earth God's wife fell in love with the man who

was entrusted to guard her. Consequently God cut off the rope, which fell on the top of the Liwe Iya Nkumbi and God sealed off the gate in heaven. In the evening men, God's wife, animals, birds, fishes, reptiles and insects gathered on the top of the Liwe Iya Nkumbi, but God told them that they will never return to him in their present forms which have annoyed him. They must spread on earth and find their own existence. From that day up to the present, the Kavango people and animals, birds, reptiles, fishes and insects remain on earth, but, in addition, they are subject to death.

A form of this myth has been transmitted from one generation to the other as far back as can now be traced.

There is also a belief that after the ancestors of men, animals, birds, reptiles, fishes and insects were created in heaven, there remained a bit of material left over from each species. These God put together and created the first elephant. Until now the older people in the Kavango area believe that an elephant's meat contains all the various types of flesh on earth, that of men, other animals, reptiles, fishes, birds and insects. An elephant is a living unity of all.

The Kavango people believe that on earth there was once a group of people who were too lazy to work with their hands, and would depend only on gathering of wild fruits,

consequently they became the grey apes which are to be found in the tropic and savannah regions of Africa. These apes are generally accepted to have retained certain ritual ceremonies of the Kavango people, for example, when a girl became mature she has to stay for several days in seclusion. After that a ritual dance called "Shisho" has to be held which goes on throughout the night till the next morning. During the next day the marriage of that girl to a young man or matured boy has to take place in public. The "apes" are also supposed to perform this ritual, some of them beating on fallen dry trees as their drums, female apes and children clapping their hands just as the Kavango people do during such an initiation ritual, and singing during the dance:

"Ntjima twa kalire tu vantu Kulima-lima twa tjira  
Ntjima twa kalire tu vantu Kulima-lima twa tjira"

Ape! we were human beings, we ran away from  
agricultural work. Ape! we were .....

These two beliefs, those concerning the elephant and the (Darwin in reverse) grey apes, emphasize the closeness between humankind and animalkind, as against the two words for creation which separate them.

The Kavango people believed in the spirits of the ancestors but not in any negative sense. The feeling of security,



which arose from sense of continuity and coherence of the group and unity with all else, was very important in those days. Death did not separate or destroy the link of the deceased person to his or her relatives or his or her matrilineally defined clan. The link continued even after death and the spirit (mudimu) retained the community status that that person had before death. The spirits of the matrilineal ancestors in general were the source of particular security, generating strong feelings of belonging, of continuity, and of unity. Such spirits of the ancestors (vadimu) could take different forms, including that of an animal for these were part of the one order.

Besides the spirits of the ancestors, the Kavango people believed that there are also harmful or bad spirits, called urumba, in Rushambyu and Rugciriku, undumba, in Rukwangali and Rumbunza, and harumba, in Thimbukushu. The difference between "vadimu" and "urumba" was conceived as follows:

The fortunes or misfortunes of the living descendants depend on the spirits of their ancestors (vadimu). When such spirits were wanting or demanding certain offerings this would be revealed by misfortunes within the living members, for example, illness, being unlucky while hunting, fishing, gathering, etc. The individual or individuals concerned usually consulted a diviner (oracle man or woman) to find out what the spirits of the ancestors wanted offered to them. After that an offering would be made and accompanied by ritual ceremonies. If in the situation, the illness or

other misfortune continued, such offerings and ritual ceremonies could be repeated several times. If such a state of affairs did not improve then they blamed their misfortunes on witches or sorcerers, with whom the harmful or bad spirits (urumba) were associated.

It was believed, that when a person dies of natural causes his or her spirit remains a soul which returns to God, but when a person's death is caused by a witch or sorcerer, his or her spirit becomes a ghost (urumba) which will be in the service of the witches. From the grave of such a deceased person, a ghost whose figure is the size of a baby rises, with a tail like a dog, and with its stomach behind its back facing front. Such a ghost can be used by witches to cause the death to other people. When a witch or a sorcerer dies, his or her soul becomes a spirit which goes to inhabit the body of another living sorcerer or witch. At night the body of that sorcerer releases those spirits to roam among the sleeping people to fulfill the wishes of the sorcerer whose body they inhabit.

The sense of belonging, continuity and unity, within the Kavango people was also cemented by communal ritual ceremonies. Communal ritual ceremonies took place on various occasions such as, the birth of a child, when a girl became mature, at the marriage, at the funeral, after the period of mourning, before going out hunting, fishing, or gathering, when starting ploughing, etc.

Such ritual ceremonies must not be understood as magic, by which the people tried to prevent evils or bring good fortune, such ceremonies are to be understood in the sense of reaffirmation of their belonging in the community and their unity with the rest of the nature.

These ritual reaffirmation ceremonies strengthened in turn the sense of security especially in times of crisis or uncertainty. Such ritual activities are associated with the myth which we are intending to present, discuss and analyse.

To conclude the topic about the beliefs of the Vakavango in earlier days something must be said about the interface between mythical beliefs and simple metaphor. It is hard to be clear about where one left off and the other began.

Their relationship to the rest of the nature was structured within the names of their matrilineal clans. Today the members of the clans do not feel any connection between themselves and the animals, birds, insects, from which their clans derived the names. Today the royal families within the Vakwangali and Vambunza belong to the Vakwasipika (those of the Hyena). Literally translated Vakwasipika also means, those of the servants. Vakwasipika should then mean those who serve the others. To bring this meaning in connection with the chiefs, this could mean that they serve the group which they are leading. Why a hyena is seen to be a servant, is no longer understood but it must have had metaphorical connection. The royal families within the Vashambyu and

Vagciriku belong to the Vakwankora and Vakafuma respectively, (those who hungered and those of the giant frog or toad). "Those who hungered" as the royal clan among the Vashambyu has the symbolic understanding of self-sacrifice for those one leads.

The type of edible frogs referred to (mantjeti, mahethi, mafuma) appear only when it rains. The presence of one guarantees the other. One of the most important benefits a chief could offer his or her people was the coming of rain. The royal families within the Hambukushu belong to the Hakanyime (those of the lion) clan. The lion within the Kavango culture is also considered to be "mwenya wiya" the owner of the forests (veld). This does not refer to the strength of the lion because the elephant is stronger than the lion. This means that as a hunter, the lion controls and knows the forests. A hunter hunts to provide meat to the group. All other clan names within the Kavango people are in similar ways metaphorically understood. They may once however have reflected beliefs, if not of relation to those actual creatures, then of relation to the structured natural order of which they were a part.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE DIFFUSION OF THE TJAKOVA MYTH WITHIN THE KAVANGO AREA AND THE CRITERIA EMPLOYED IN THE PREPARATION OF THE DEFINITIVE EDITION

#### THE PRINCIPLES CONTROLLING THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TJAKOVA MYTH.

Any description of the diffusion pattern of this myth requires that one has decided what shall count as its definitive version, and any decision concerning what shall count as the definitive version must take into account the regions in which competing versions have been and are current and to what sort of pressures those regions might have been subject. One needs to know where the myth has been most significant and where it has been told in the most consistent manner. We will say later why myth, in order to remain myth, must change as a people's felt sense of reality is modified by their changing experience. Myth is always on the move, and because a subjective element must inevitably enter the decision, it is important to say what we mean by a definitive edition.

Our choices, concerning what to include, have depended not only upon frequency of use and consistency but also upon the feed back from analysis. That is, upon what meaning can be given to the variants and how those meanings fit what is known of the historical experience of the people or, where the history is not known, upon the coherence and likelihood of the context that can be reconstructed from the meanings themselves. Thus, when we come to the analysis, we will say that certain competing variations of the current version appear to be elements of an older version (with a hero who must have had a different name) retained in memory because they have a role to play even though they are not included in the dominant version. (See reference to Thimbambal in the report of the field test of the text below) These variations we have included in the definitive edition.

Those portions of myth which are sometimes included in the telling of the dominant version and sometimes not, thus creating in effect a variety of versions, we have had to decide about individually. For the most part we have included them and noted that they are sometimes omitted. Others that are infrequently included in the telling, notably the Thimbamba episode and certain additions to the end of the myth, we had felt it best to leave out of the text, but to include them in the notes. In the case of Thimbamba the field test caused us to revise our position.

Our concern has been to place on record this part of the traditions of our people and, as we have said, traditions

are always changing as experience changes. In the last century the traditions have no longer been confronted by the experiences of migration, of looking for a place to be and of finding one, but of keeping a foothold in what had been found against the incursions of other groups both African and European. Then came the challenge of Christianity and western type education, of the urban centres, of contract labour and the nuclear family, of an increased emphasis upon material possessions and private property, and of decades of being caught up in war. In a sense Christianity and Secular Materialism also became traditions of our people but they are discontinuous with the past, as are the myths that, while belonging more to African tradition and drawing on more ancient images, have been generated by the crisis situation in fragmentary style.

A definitive edition is not an out of date edition and we have sought to be as contemporary as possible. We have gone to the older folk in the community because we were looking for the stability that continuity provides, but they are living older folk who have experienced the crises, advances, and ordinary events of their place and time and, as the myth shows, responded to them. The influence of living adjacent to Angola, for example, is reflected in the the Tjakova Myth. The steel plough was introduced into Angola by the Portugese and from thence it came into the Kavango and is reflected in the myth. It is not surprising that the small fisher-bird, Katjetje, who represents that plough, speaks Kimbundu (one of the languages of Angola) when demanding cooked grains.

Those interviewed were not asked in the first place, "what do you remember of the old peoples' telling of the myth when you were a child?" but "What is the Tjakova myth as you hear it told or would tell it now?"

We have not looked for the oldest form of the myth, but rather for THAT FORM WHICH, WHILE REFLECTING RECENT AND CONTEMPORARY PRESSURES, IS LIKELY TO BE IN CONTINUITY WITH THE OLDER AND ONCE WIDESPREAD VERSION OF THE MYTH THAT SEEMS TO HAVE DEVELOPED, out of an earlier migration myth, IN THE EARLY DECADES OF SETTLED EXISTENCE IN THE KAVANGO. Some of our people, particularly those in the west, were never settled but always threatened which constituted an influence against the survival of the Tjakova myth in particular. We will return to this below.

The quest for continuity requires that one know something of the history of the development of the myth, and that is not clear. According to how one decides to interpret similar myths with different actors, and how one understands the process involved, that is, to what extent the cycle was built out of modified bits and pieces which still enjoy an independent existence, and to what extent the present bits and pieces represent borrowing and modification from the major cycle, so will the development and therefore the basic diffusion picture change.

The distinction between what is a version or part of the Tjakova myth cycle even though its characters have different names, and what is not a part or version, even though it does have the same characters, depends to some extent upon the criteria one sets up, and that must wait upon the



analysis of the main cycle. Only when its distinctive characteristics have been teased out would one be able to say with precision and with significant criteria, in what sense the other myths belong with it.

Thus with a preliminary understanding of what was a part of the main cycle, and what was best counted as a version of the myth under a different name, and what was really a different myth even if it had the same actor or actors, we sought to discover:

(i) the actual diffusion of the major Tjakova myth cycle and those related to it,

(ii) the ways in which myth was developed and perpetuated within the communities, and

(iii) what had been the influences for and against the adoption or survival of traditional myth in each part of the area in question.

We will elaborate these; not in the rough logic in which they are set out but in order of increasing complexity.

#### THE PERPETUATION OF TRADITIONAL MYTH

The telling of a story within the Kavango area has always been a creative performance to which the members of the audience never listen in total silence, nor await the

teller's invitation to join in. Rather, the audience joins the teller in singing and sometimes breaks into the performance with additions or comments.

It is traditional that stories, legends and myths are told in the evening, and finished before going to bed. No story, legend or myth is to be told during the day, as it is common belief that children, if told a story, legend or myth during the day, are likely to loose their way in the forest and disappear. In any case, time for telling stories during the day has never been available because parents are busy doing some or other work. After supper all parents got the opportunity of coming together with their children in front of the hut of the leader of the village and to tell their children the community's stories. In the urban and nuclear family situations this practice no longer continues.

#### REGIONAL INFLUENCES AGAINST THE SURVIVAL OF TRADITIONAL MYTH IN GENERAL

In the western districts under urban influence the practice of communal story telling has diminished and will never come back again. Many children stay in boarding schools and on the Mission stations during school quarters and during the holidays they flock to Rundu to dance in the disco, while parents stay at home, without, of course, children to whom they may tell their traditional stories. The development of this situation needs to be understood historically and regionally.

From the founding, in 1910, of the first Mission Station along the eastern bank of the Kavango River at Kandenga, until the 1960s and the intensification of the liberation struggles in both Angola and Namibia, the influence of the missionaries was strong. They tended to consider all things traditional to be "heathen" and needing to be destroyed if the "civilizing" culture was to be successful, on the other hand the retelling of myths and moral legends was also interested them. The missions and the settler farmers did much to undermine the confidence of the Kavango people in their culture but the schools at the mission stations, which might have been supposed to be the focus of this drive, did little to weaken the tendency to retelling stories, myths and legends, because, even at the mission stations, in the evenings students who knew the traditional legends and myths retold them to other students with whom they sang and enjoyed the stories. While Christianity penetrated the Kavango, that is, the area south of the river, the traditional way of living continued virtually undisturbed by either Christianity or mission schooling north of the river, and it was there that most of the Kavango people lived until 1950. Today, perhaps a third would regard the north as home but many of these move to the south bank as the civil war hots up in their area and back again when it dies down. Those from the north remain more traditional than those in the south who have been exposed to missions and mission schooling for many decades.

Though people became familiar with western commodities, that fact did not greatly weaken traditional myth but to an

extent revitalised it because western items like guns, shoes and clothing were introduced into, for example, the Tjakova myth when it was told to or by the younger generation.

The missionaries, among others, encouraged the males to go on contract labour. In the early stages even migratory labourer did little to weaken the myth because after completing their contracts within the interior of Namibia or in the Johannesburg or other South African mines they returned to their homes in kraals of twenty or so families and to the pleasure of retelling the myths and legends, which the older folk and the women had kept alive for the children in their absence. It must be said however that here and there some of those returning compared the characters within the myths or legends with characters seen in the movies. Gradually, however, contract workers came back having taken over not only European values and European names but also European practices and social disintegration set in. In particular the nuclear family emerged. One man living with his wife and children and only a few of them knowing the traditions of their people and fewer caring to transmit them to their children.

What really brought widespread change and weakened the retelling of traditional stories was the development of Rundu as capital of Kavango and the liberation bush wars in Angola and Namibia especially when this become intensified from 1960 onwards. From that time on people treasured their sleep in fear of being interrogated by the soldiers or the freedom fighters. The spread of myths and legends within the

younger generations weakened. Many of the children stayed in Rundu during school holidays where they could go to the disco's and clubs, consequently traditions were neglected and even despised. Many of the parent generation also came to stay in the suburbs of Rundu, in Kehemu, Ndama and Sauyemwa. Those who came to stay in the vicinity of Rundu began to adopt the style of living of the urban areas.

Urbanization and the movement of people to the capital is increasing. People prefer to read Shakespeare, Goethe or the works of other western authors rather than to listen to what they term "trivial, uncivilised, irrational, and useless stories".

#### REGIONAL INFLUENCES AGAINST THE ACCEPTANCE OR SURVIVAL OF THE TJAKOVA MYTH IN PARTICULAR

The Tjakova myth is a progress myth and, in its developed form, the myth of a settled community. The failure to feel settled, therefore, mitigates against the acceptance or survival of the myth.

The Ovambo tribes whose area lies to the west of the Kavango, made several invasions into Ukwangali and Mbunza, the most western areas of the Kavango, and they in turn raided their immediate neighbours to the east, the Vashambyu. Among other things the Ovambos took a number of the royal girls and some of the royal boys to Ovambo. These were to return to their own people after many years. For these groups, whether north or south of the river, the

Tjakova myth was never a viable option. They favoured myth which symbolized return (perhaps to Mashi) rather than progress, such as those of Sambilikita and Diranene, (see appendix). These myths may have been influenced by the experience of the royal children and their desire to return to Ukwangali and Mbunza. While these myths could equally well be said to be in continuity with the past they are not the Tjakova myth, even if they have images in common.

#### PRESENT-DAY DIFFUSION OF THE TJAKOVA MYTH

Much of the Kavango area, where Christianity did not penetrate so quickly, remained a favourable situation for the telling of traditional myths long after colonization of Angola by the Portuguese and Namibia by the Germans. Traditions have remained strong among the Kavango people until recent decades, and still remains relatively strong among those who occupy the Kavango area north of the river.

Today, the presence of traditional myths, as would be expected, is most strongly observed among those Kavango people living farthest from the mission stations and schools and, in the south, from Rundu the administrative capital. In the remote areas, especially places far from the Kavango River, people are still traditionally rooted, most of their children still stay with their parents and the stories are still told to the children as in earlier times. Even the atmosphere of those days still prevails in these remote areas. The storytelling takes place after supper, in a

manner which is lively and informal, while the older men here and there, blow clouds of smoke from their traditionally made pipe (mbiga) and the sounds of the wild-life to which the myth refers can still be heard. The adult audience still interrupt the teller to exercise their critical evaluation on what the teller is telling even as their ancestors did.

Apart from these very remote areas, there remain areas in the north-eastern Kavango south of the river where the traditional forms continue and the myth is not only perpetuated but updated to reflect whatever change in the sense of reality takes place. It has not been possible during the time of this study to visit the Angolan bank of the river, where most of the Kavango people lived until 1950, nor many of the islands within the river, but personal memories from before the escalation of the Angolan civil war and what information is carried across, suggests that traditions remain stronger north of the river, where urbanization is less and western type schooling less widespread. It is the case that north of the river, as in the south, that the further west one goes the less significant the Tjakova myth becomes and the more that myths of return flourish. In ethnic terms this means that the Tjakova myth is strongly rooted and well-known among the Hambukushu and the Vagciriku and among those who live in the eastern part of the Shambyu region, but especially among the representatives of these groups north of the river. (See the adjacent map.)

The Tjakova Myth is also known in Caprivi especially among the Hambukushu and Vagciriku living there. The history of the Hambukushu shows that this group moved up and down within the area of Botswana, West Zambia and the Caprivi before they settled down in present-day Mbukushu.

The Tjakova Myth is relatively strong in Botswana and most of the short stories of Tjakova have been recorded there. This is especially the case at Shakawe where even today many of the Hambukushu and members of other Kavango tribes can be found.

Prominent among the myths that have survived, apart from that of Tjakova, are those of Mukunwa, The Thornfish (liputu), Shihengo, Diranene and Sambilikita, some of the latter clearly being versions or corruptions of the Tjakova myth.

#### THE TJAKOVA MYTH CYCLE - ITS VERSIONS AND SATELLITES

We said above that the distinction between what is a version or a part of the Tjakova myth cycle even though its characters have different names, and what is not a part or version, even though it has the same characters, depends to some extent upon the criteria one sets up, and that must wait upon the analysis of the main cycle. Only when its distinctive characteristics have been teased out will one be able to say with precision and with significant criteria, which other myths belong with it.



A story concerning Shihengo is well-known among the Vashambyu, and the Vambunza and Vakwangali have the stories of Sambilikita and Diranene. It has been suggested that these are equivalent myths to Tjakova but with different actors and somewhat different events.

Within the Mbukushu region one can find various short stories which are obviously related to sections of the Tjakova cycle. Which owes what to which is not clear. These separate stories might be given the following descriptive titles:

1. Tjakova's dangerous adventure when looking for his father.
2. The killing of Tjakova's father by an eagle.
3. The abduction of Tjakova's father by the eagle to the unknown land.
4. The story of an old giant with the "intelligent".  
( "dikithi", in Thimbukushu can mean anything which is believed to have the capacity of swallowing human beings, it can be a beast, an ogre, a gobbling or a giant. A giant in Rushambyu, however, is differentiated by the word "Lindungurume").
5. The marriage of the Giant (dikithi) to Mayenga-Nyambi.
6. The Tjakova story which begins with a big egg.
7. The story of Movange.
8. The adventure of Tjakova in the forest of the giants.

It is not our intention to deal with each part or version in detail but there are some general comments that might be made at this stage.

The Diranene story, current among the Vambunza and Vakwangali, begins, much as does Tjakova, as follows:

Once upon a time (or in the ancient time) there was a pregnant woman who could not eat anything other than the eggs of an eagle. One day she requested her husband in a friendly way, to go into the forest to look for eggs of an eagle for her.

From the beginning, to the death of the unmentioned husband the story resembles the Tjakova story with the absence of the older son, Manongo, and of certain ritual songs which are of the essence of the Tjakova cycle.<sup>2</sup> In comparing the stories however it is important to note that ritual song in general is strongly rooted among the Hambukushu, Vagciriku and some Vashambyu, but that this, like the Tjakova myth itself but with no obvious connection, becomes less the more one moves westward.

There are aspects of the Tjakova myth and its parallels that are familiar to all the peoples of this part of Africa. One respondent from the Kavango who has traveled widely in neighbouring regions said:

The fate of a beast, dragon, giant or whatsoever the case might be, which is to be slain by an extraordinary boy, or by fire within its stomach, is not limited to a particular region, but such a motif is diffused over the whole world. <sup>3</sup>

The same respondent said, however, that there is something different about the Tjakova myths even though the details of the story may change among the various Kavango tribes.

The difference, he said, is that:

"in all these stories the main focus is on the movement towards the future and on an extraordinary intelligent boy".

Indeed this is so. The beginning of the Tjakova stories differs, for example, one version begins with an egg, others with meat or fruit, and the name of the extraordinary boy may be different, but all such versions, if related to the Tjakova story, have something in common, movement toward the future, and the figure of an extraordinarily gifted or "intelligent" boy.

It is also to be noted that the conflict with and the death of the beast does not occur, as it does in other myths, as the main and sometimes single theme, but as a section appearing late in the story and only to be understood in the light of what preceeds and accompanies it, and even the "intelligent" boy has grown older in his journey, been married, killed and come back to life, all before he meets the beast.

#### THE FIELD-TESTING OF THE PROPOSED DEFINITIVE VERSION OF THE TJAKOVA MYTH

When the proposed definitive version was complete it was field-tested by offering it for reading or reading it in

different districts and to the person locally and popularly regarded as the "expert".

On 18th November 1990 the researcher succeeded in again finding Susanna Runguro, an elder woman, at Murwani (border). After reading the Tjakova version as written, Susanna said that what had been written could be the best Tjakova version but she expressed her dissatisfaction about the "Thimbamba" episode. According to her the "Thimbamba" episode and the ground clearing for agriculture with which it is associated would only take place, every few years, after periods of poor rain in which agriculture had been neglected and the natural vegetation had been allowed to re-establish itself. The myth refers to it happening everyday. The "Thimbamba" episode signifies not only the attempt made at agriculture but that the harvest was not sufficient. Susanna Runguro also said that if the "Thimbamba" episode could be included in this written version, then it could comprise all the various Tjakova short stories and Tjakova fragments current within the Hambukushu in the Mbukushu area and at Shakawe in Botswana.

On the 24th November 1990 the researcher visited Andreas Kantana, one of the popular old people within the Vagciriku. The written Tjakova myth was read to him. Andreas Kantana also expressed his satisfaction with the written version but said that the "Thimbamba" episode could help in our search for interpretation of the myth.

On the 26th November 1990 the researcher met Stefanus Kamonga, a well regarded old man within the Vagciriku. Due to their vast knowledge about the Rugciriku and Vagciriku culture and history, Stefanus Kamonga and Andreas Kantana are members of the Rugciriku committee. Stefanus Kamonga also appreciated the written version and expressed his wishes that the "Thimbamba" episode should be included in the written version.

After testing the version with a few old people among the Vagciriku, the researcher approached several older and highly regarded people within the Hambukushu. Erwin Mbambo, who left Kavango long ago during the exodus of the Namibians to other countries, listened to the written version. He acknowledged that the version includes most of the fragments and Tjakova stories. One part he missed in association with the "Thimbamba" episode was the repetition of the same cycle. His desire was that the "Thimbamba" episode should be included in the written version to make it a complete and "final" Tjakova version. Erastus Muronga, Stefanus Thikusho and Florinus Fugre, among others of the Hambukushu approved the written Tjakova version. As with the others they desired the inclusion of the "Thimbamba" episode in the written version.

The test of the version within the Vashambyu was not, as would be expected, as effective as in the case of the Vagciriku and Hambukushu. Only about a third of the Vashambyu who occupy the eastern part of the Shambyu area have knowledge of the Tjakova myth, and the more one moves

westward the more does it become clear that myths like Shihengo are better known than the Tjakova myth. Rebeka Kambundu, born at Uruyi or Mashu, and belonging to the royal house of the Vashambyu expressed her approval of the written version but also said that she would like to see the "Thimbamba" episode included.

A testing of the written version also took place among the Vambunza and Vakwangali. In both cases, while the people enjoyed the written version, they could not comment because the Tjakova myth has disappeared within these groups. They attributed this state of affairs to the invasions of the Ovambo people into Ilkwangali and Mbunza and the western Shambyu area. During such time of stress these groups lost the Tjakova myth and develop other myths which better expressed their feelings at that time. The Diranene and Sambilikita myths served that purpose.

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1 There is a sub-scene that is occasionally included in the Tjakova cycle concerning Thimbamba, a little brother of Mayenga-Nyambi, in which he is set to snare or shoot with his bow and arrow, birds and small animals who would steal from the grain store by the threshing floor. It is seldom included, but the acknowledged place, whether spoken or not, of this organized protection of the grain store, symbolizes a settled if not very elaborate agricultural life-style.

2 These are "Kwaka-kwakata makuha ghange" and "Kuthina nawa-nawa", as well as the screaming ritual song namely, "Tjutju-kalindja-ngili", for which see the myth itself.

3 Petrus Libebe, otherwise known as Anton Munnika

## CHAPTER 5

### THE TJAKOVA MYTH

The text of the myth is set out with its translation beneath it and the related notes beneath that. The notes are not meant to be interpretation, but are included to enable the reader in English to hear the story with all the associations and nuances that would have registered with the original hearers. They are not simply a gloss but should be read along with the translation. Where the story would contain a number of repetitions of a phrase this is indicated by ,-----, after the verse to be repeated.

The myth is spoken in Rusambyu but every now and again sections, particularly but not exclusively sections recounting ritual, are in other languages. This will be noted when it occurs. It will also be noted when there are digressions from the literal meaning of the original for the sake of clarity.

The greater part of the following myth cycle is in three of the four live languages of the five Kavango groups. The ritual part of the story is told mostly in Thimbukushu, while what is a sort of comment on the events is told in Rugciriku and Rushambyu which today are in many of their aspects indistinguishable. The live language of the area, Rukwangali appears in the myth as well as two languages of Angola, Kimbundu and Tjiwiko. Using the following abbreviations each change in language will be reported immediately before the verse at which it occurs. Where a verse is itself mixed in language this will be indicated in the verse. Some of this mixing is undoubtedly the result of the recent mixing of the peoples but some of it is clearly a device within the myth itself.

Thimbukushu = T	Rukwangali = Ru
Rushambyu = R	Kimbundu = K
Rugciriku = Rg	Tjiwiko = Tj

## TJAKOVA

Rg or R

001 Mu mwaka dinya da shikumwa mwa parukire murume na mukadendi.

002 Monavo wa mbeli kwa kalire Manongo.

003 Apa gha kalire mukadi ku udito wa uvili, uye kapi kalyanga kehe ndya, nani ngoli nkwanzi mauta gha ngonga tupu.

\*\*\*\*\*

001 In the ancient time there was a man and his wife. (a)

002 The name of their first child was Manongo. (b)

003 When the wife was pregnant for the second time, (c) she could not eat other foods but only the eggs of an eagle. (d)

\*\*\*\*\*

(a) The difference between an ordinary story and a myth is marked in the Kavango ways of telling as follows: Mu mwaka dinya da shikumwa (Rusambyu and Rugciriku); Pa kare - kare pa mutango (Thimbukushu); Mo nomvho da sikumwa (Rukwangali and Rumbunza). All of these may be translated as: In the ancient time ....

The ordinary story on the other hand usually starts with : Liyuva limwe (Rusambyu and Rugciriku); Diyuva dimwe (Thimbukushu); Ezuva limwe (Rukwangali and Rumbunza); all of which may be translate as: One day .... See v.5 for this use. Here in v.1 the listener is alerted for the telling of myth.

(b) The word Manongo has come to mean stupid and has been understood as such as long as living memory can trace it back among the Kavango tribes but this is almost certainly because of what it represents in this myth. It is not therefore a name that would be given to a child in real life. Manongo in the story is not in fact stupid in any ordinary sense of the word. The reason for its use here will become clear as what Manongo represents in comparison to his brother emerges. The original meaning of the word is almost certainly the plural of linongo which is the waxy, gummy shell that a particular type of wild bee of this area constructs to store honey in. The significance of honey will appear later in the myth. Although this sticky substance has a use in treating the hide stretched on a drum it here represents that which is to be cast away once the honey is obtained. Only the stupid would actively seek them in preference to the honey. The only other slight possibility is a corruption of maunongo the plural of unongo which means friendliness. Among this people a distinction is made between different levels of friendliness and if one wished to speak of all possible levels then one would have to use maunongo. This however is a rare usage, it requires corruption and has little meaning in this situation.

(c) Literally the word translated pregnant "udito" means heavy. The Kavango people are fond of euphemism. The word for pregnancy "utumba" is mostly used of an animal.

(d) The eagle and therefore the eggs of the eagle have special significance in this culture. When the eagle is near the powers-that-be are near.



004 Mpo kava renkeranga va Manongo na vashe kehe liyuva  
vayende vaka papare oku vaghutera vangonga.

005 Liyuva limwe mpo va tantilire vashe va Manongo monavo:

006 "Manongo monande,toko tuyende mu wiya tuka papare  
maghuta gha vangonga."

007 Mu kuyenda mundjira yavo vashe va Manongo vavo okuno  
kuna kuyimba:

T

008 "Kwaka,kwakata makuha ghange,kwaka,kwakata makuha  
ghange,kwaka,kwakata makuha ghange."

Rg or R

009 Nko kuya tika munda ya limutondo ano vashe va Manongo  
nko kulighamena ku uiru okuno vavo kuna kughamba:

010 "Manongo ve, shinya shitunguru ku limutondo ameshi sha  
ngonga?"

011 Apa ghalimburulire Manongo ashi sha ngonga, vashe nko  
kuvareka kuronda okuno vavo kuna kuyimba:

\*\*\*\*\*

004 Manongo and his father therefore were compelled to go  
out  
every day searching for the eggs of an eagle.

005 One day Manongo's father told his son:

006 "Manongo my son, let us go into the veld to look for the  
eggs of an eagle."

007 As they were on the way, Manongo's father sang:(e)

008 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals, kwaka-kwakata my sandals."(f)

009 They came under a huge tree and Manongó's father looked  
upwards into the tree and said:

010 "Hey Manongo! Is that nest in the tree not that of an  
eagle?"

011 When Manongo answered that it was that of an eagle, his  
father started to climb while singing:

\*\*\*\*\*

(e)This singing, which is in Thimbukushu, is a ritual  
expressing relationship with the natural order. It is  
performed by the leader of the group and was the norm in  
traditional society. It occurs next in verses 12 and 25.  
Tjakova performs the same ritual as he journeys in search of  
his father and each of the animals, save the hyena, does the  
same as it searches for food for Tjakova's party.

(f) Kwaka-kwakata imitates the noise made by the sandals on  
the hard ground.

T

012 "Kuthina nawa nawa, kusuruka na unongo, kuthina nawa - nawa, kusuruka na unongo, kuthina nawa - nawa, kusuruka na unongo."

Rg or R

013 Vashe va Manongo nko ku katika ku litunguru lya mbu maghuta gha ngonga.

014 Nko kujuida marumpandi na maghuta ano nko kugha vhughumena Manongo munda ya shitondo.

015 Vashe va Manongo nko kuvareka kumina maghuta agha gha hupiromo mu litunguru.

016 Vaha hokwera vashe va Manongo kumina maghuta, hawe nkara yina kakatere ku nyara.

017 Vashe va Manongo nko kuvareka ku takuma okuno vavo kuna ku yimba kutwara mu ngovera ya ngoma:

\*\*\*\*\*

012 "I am climbing up with consideration in order that I should climb down in peace, I am climbing up with consideration in order that I should climb down in peace."

013 Manongo's father reached the huge nest which was full of eggs.

014 He filled the baskets and tossed them to Manongo under the tree. (g)

015 Manongo's father started to gobble the eggs which remained in the huge nest. (h)

016 While he was picking up the eggs, a crab grabbed onto his finger. (i)

017 Manongo's father started to scream a chant with a rhythm like that of a drum:

\*\*\*\*\*

(g) "Marumpandi" is a plural form of the word "rumpandi" which is a traditional basket or firm net made out of roots for transporting larger wild fruits or eggs.

(h) The word translated as "gobble" has the sense of swallow greedily. The gathering tradition was just as here described. Berries, for example, would be picked to fill the baskets and then everything left on the tree would be stripped and eaten.

(i) "Nkara" is a water crab that lives in the mud of river banks.

T

018 "Tshutshu, kalindjangili, mawene, kalindjangili, nithiye, kalindjangili kukora, kalindjangili, pawihho, kalindjangili panoko, kalindjangili."

Rg or R

019 Manongo nko ku tantera vashe:

020 "Anwe vava, nganderenuko maghuta niya mine ano apa niya kuta, niya mupe lighano."

021 Vashe va Manongo nko ku ganda maghuta, ano apa gha kutire Manongo, nko ku tantera vashe:

022 "Anwe vava, shitoghonenu ku mutavi shimyoke."

023 Vashe va Manongo nko kushitoghona ku mutavi ano ashi myoka.

024 Pa kugcumpuka vashe va Manongo nko kuvareka kuyimba:

T

025 "Kuthina nawa - nawa, kusuruka na unongo ----."

\*\*\*\*\*

18. "It's sore! kalindjangili, ow! kalindjangili, let go! kalindjangili, it hurts! kalindjangili, for your father's sake! kalindjangili, for your mother's sake, kalindjangili." (j)

019 Manongo said to his father:

020 "Father, let down some eggs so that I also may gobble them and when I am full, I will give you advice." (k)(l)

021 Manongo's father let down some eggs and when Manongo was full, he told his father:

022 "Father, beat it against a branch so that it spatters."

023 Manongo's father beat it against a branch and it spattered.

024 Then climbing down Manongo's father started to sing:

025 "I climbed up with consideration in order that I should climb down in peace, ----"

\*\*\*\*\*

(j) Ritual screaming in Thimbukushu by Manongo's father. See under v.8. Kalindjangili represents the sound of a drum.

(k) Manongo here speaks in Rugciciriku or Rushambyu. Both are languages of the Kavango region. The Vagciciriku are the nearest neighbours of the Hambukushu westward and the nearest neighbours of the Vasambyu eastward.

The fact of exchange which was the order of the day in those times is also reflected here.

(l) "anwe is a plural form of the word "ove" meaning "you". Polite form in Kavango languages is expressed by a plural.

Rg or R

026 Pa kuya tika pa livhu, Manongo na vashe nko kudamuna marumpandi gha mbu maghuta va pangengeke okuno vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

027 "Kwaka, kwakata makuha ghange, ----."

Rg or R

028 Pa kuya tika ku mudi vashe va Manongo nko kutaterera dogoro ngurova ntani vana kutereka maghuta.

029 Pa kashi ka matiku uye mukadendi na Manongo vana pwere muturo, nko kulya maghuta naghanshe ano ku hupitapo maghuta matatu tupu.

030 Vashe va Manongo nko kuyenda matiku vaka tshave vikuni nko kuya vankeda madiko gha mayingi na ku yendaura ko.

031 Pa kukya liyuva, vashe va Manongo nko kutwarera mukadavo maghuta matatu tupu.

032 Mukadi nko kupura:

033 "Kuninko ngoli oku ghana kara maghuta ghamwe?"

\*\*\*\*\*

026 When he reached the ground, Manongo and his father picked up the baskets filled with eggs and carried them (home). Meanwhile Manongo's father sang:

027 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals, ----"

028 When they came home Manongo's father waited until late evening and then he started to boil the eggs. (m)(n)

029 In the middle of the night when his wife and Manongo were deep asleep, Manongo's father ate the eggs himself leaving only three.

030 Manongo's father went that night into the veld to chop wood and then made fires in several places and many footprints around each of these fireplaces.

031 At sunrise Manongo's father took the three eggs that were left to his wife.

032 The wife asked:

033 "Where are the other eggs?"

\*\*\*\*\*

(m) Home does not refer to a hut but to place i.e. the kraal.

(n) In those days many things collected from the fields, e.g. certain meats, eggs, small animals, etc. were cooked by a male, the head of the kraal, at a place behind his hut. They called it "shinako", secret place for sacrifices. Females and children were not allowed to go there, hence the late hour.

034 Vashe va Manongo nko ku limburura:

035 "Mukadande,ameshi una kumona madiko omu ghana yura ano nka kenga tupu mpadi da vagenda ava vana tu myaghukero matiku,nke ngoli kasha niva yumbure?"

036 Mukadendi nko kuvi pura.

037 Manongo na vashe nko kuyenda mu wiya vaka papare maghuta.

038 Muku yenda vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

039 "Kwaka,kwakata makuha ghange,kwaka,kwakata makuha ghange,kwaka,kwakata makuha ghange."

Rg or R

040 Opo vaka tikire mumda ya limutondo oku ghadikire ngonga litunguru lyendi, vashe va Manongo nko kuvare ka ku ronda okuno vavo kuna kuyi-mba:

T

041 "Kuthina nawa-nawa,kusuruka na unongo ----."

Rg or R

042 Nko kuywida marumpandi ano nko kugha vughumena Manongo agha kaure.

\*\*\*\*\*

034 Manongo's father answered:

035 "My wife! you can see for yourself all those fireplaces and the footprints of the guests around them, what else could I have given them?"

036 The wife believed it.

037 (So) Manongo and his father went again into the veld to search for eggs.

038 While they were walking, Manongo's father was singing:

039 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals, ----"

040 When they came under the huge tree on which the eagle made her huge nest, Manongo's father started climbing up while he sang:

041 "I am climbing up with consideration in order that I climb down in peace ----."

042 He filled the baskets and tossed them to Manongo to catch.

043 Vashe va Manongo nko ku vareka kumina agha gha hupiro mu litunguru,ano hawe vava kwate weno,mbati ana pandeke ku nyara.

044 Vashe va Manongo nko kubwayamo:

T

045 "Tshutshu kalindjangili,nithiye, kalindjangili,mawene, kalindjamgili, ----."

Rg or R

046 Manongo nko kutantera vashe ashi:

047 "Anwe vava ngandere nuko maghuta niya mine ano apa niya kuta niya mupeko lighano."

048 Vashe va Manongo nko kuganda maghuta ano apa ghamanine kumina.Manongo nko kutantera vashe:

049 "Anwe vava shitoghonenu ku mutavi shimyoke."

050 Vashe va Manongo nko kushitoghona ku mutavi ashi myoka.

051 Pa kuqcumpuka vashe va Manongo ava vareke kuyimba:

\*\*\*\*\*

043 Manongo's father started to gobble the eggs which remained in the huge nest, and while he was picking them up a water tortoise bit into his finger.(o)

044 Manongo's father screamed:

045 "It's sore! kalindjangili, ow! kalindjangili,----"

046 Manongo then said to his father:

047 "Father, let down some eggs to me so that I may gobble them and when I am full I will give you advice."

048 Manongo's father let down some eggs and after gobbling them, Manongo told his father:

049 "Father, beat it against a branch so that it can spatter!":

050 Manongo's father then hit it against a branch and it spattered.

051 While climbing down, Manongo's father sang:

\*\*\*\*\*

(o) The water tortoise is the second water creature to be placed in the nest.

T

052 "Kuthina nawa-nawa,kusuruka,na unongo ----" [Rg or R]  
dogoro ku yatika pa livhu.

Rg or R

053 Nko kudamuna marumpandi gha maghuta vayende ku mudi  
okuno vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

054 "Kwaka,kwakata makuha ghange, kwaka,kwakata makuha  
ghange ----"[Rg or R] dogoro ku katika ku mudi.

Rg or R

055 Dogoro ngurova ntani vana kughatereka maghuta vene vashe  
va Manongo.

056 Matiku ntani vana kutentura vashe va Manongo ano kulya  
naghanshe kuhupidamo matatu tupu.

057 Nko kuyenda vaka tshave vikuni ano kuya vankeda madiko  
gha mangi na kuyendaurako.

058 Ngura-ngura mukadi nko kumu twarera maghuta matatu tupu  
okuno vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kughamba:

059 "Mukadande kenga tupu mpadi da vagenda ava vanayo  
matiku,ndi nke kasha niva yumbure?"

060 Mukadi nko kuvi pura.

\*\*\*\*\*

052 "I climbed up with consideration in order that I climb  
down in peace ----" till he reached the ground.

053 Then they picked up the baskets and went home, Manongo's  
father singing:

054 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals, kwaka-kwakata my sandals,---"  
till they came home.

055 Late in the evening Manongo's father started to boil the  
eggs.

056 In the night Manongo's father took the pot away from the  
fire and ate all the eggs save three.

057 Then he went to chop wood and he made fires in various  
places and left footprints around each.

058 In the morning the wife was given only three eggs while  
Manongo's father said:

059 "My wife! you can see for yourself those footprints of  
the guests who came in the night, what else should I have  
given them?"

060 The wife believed it.

061 Vashe va Manongo na Manongo nko kuyenda mu wiya vaka papare maghuta gha ngonga.

062 Mu kuyenda, vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba ku twara mu ngovera ya nkaku davo:

T

063 "Kwaka, kwakata makuha ghange, kwaka, kwakata makuha ghange ----" [Rg or R] dogoro ku katika munda ya limutondo.

Rg or R

064 Vashe va Monongo nko kuvareka kuronda okuno vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

065 "Kuthina nawa-nawa, kusuruka, na unongo, kuthina nawa-nawa, kusuruka, na unongo ----" [Rg or R] dogoro ku katika ku litunguru.

Rg or R

066 Vashe va Manongo nko kuyuida marumpandi na maghuta, ano nko kugha vhughumina Manongo oghu gha tatereliro munda ya linya limutondo.

067 Vashe va Manongo nko ku vareka ku mina maghuta agha gha hupiro mo mu litunguru ano vava kwate weno hawe mpuma kaki ku nyara.

068 Vashe va Manongo nko ku bwayamo:

\*\*\*\*\*

061 Manongo's father and Manongo then went into the veld to search for the eggs of an eagle.

062 While they were walking, Manongo's father was singing in accord with the rhythm of his sandals:

063 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals, ----" till they came under that huge tree.

064 Manongo's father started to climb up while singing:

065 "I am climbing up with consideration in order that I may climb down in peace, ----" till he reached the huge nest.

066 Manongo's father then filled up the baskets with eggs and tossed them down to Manongo who was waiting underneath.

067 Manongo's father started to gobble the eggs which remained in the huge nest, and as he was picking up an egg an iguana bit into his finger. (p)

068 Manongo's father was screaming:

\*\*\*\*\*

(p) This is the river iguana and the third water creature to be placed in the nest.



T

069 "Tshutshu, kalindjangili, kukora, kalindjangili, ----"

Rg or R

070 Manongo nko ku tantera vashe:

071 "Anwe vava, nganderenuko maghuto niya mine ano apa nikuta, kamwe nimupe lighano."

072 Vashe va Manongo nko ku ganda maghuta, ano apa gha kutire Manongo, nko kutantera vashe:

073 "Anwe vava, shitoghonenu ku mutavi shidjupukeko ku njara yenu."

074 Vashe va Manongo nko kushi toghona ku mutavi ano ashi djupuka ko.

075 Vashe va Manongo nko ku vareka kugcumpuka okuno vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

076 "Kuthina nawa-nawa, kusuraka na unongo ----" [Rg or R] dogoro kuya tika palivhu.

Rg or R

077 Nko kudamuna marumpandi gha maghuta vaka yende ku mundi okuno vashe va Manongo kuna kuyimba kutwara mungovera ya nkaku davo:

T

078 "Kwaka, kwakata, makuha ghange ----" [Rg or R] dogoro ku katika ku mundi.

\*\*\*\*\*  
069 "It's sore! kalindjangili, ow! kalindjangili, ----"

070 Manongo then told his father:

071 "Father, let down some eggs to me so that I may gobble them and after that I will give you advice."

072 Manongo's father let down some eggs to Manongo (who gobbled them) and when he was full, Manongo told his father:

073 "Father, beat it against a branch so that it lets go of your finger."

074 Manongo's father hit it against a branch and it let go of his finger.

075 Manongo's father then started to climb down singing:

076 "I climbed up with consideration in order that I climb down in peace, ----" till he reached the ground.

077 They then picked up the baskets and went home Manongo's father singing after the rhythm of his sandals:

078 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals, ----" till they came home.

Rg or R

079 Vashe va Manongo nko kutaterera dogoro vantu navanshe vana rara ntani vana kutereka maghuta.

080 Matiku nko kutentura maghuta ano nko kugha Iya, kushuvamo matatu tupu.

081 Nko kushapuka vashe va Manongo vaka tshave vikuni ano nko kuya hwamaika madiko naku yendaura ko.

082 Apa Iya kire liyuva, vashe va Manongo nko kutwarera mukadavo maghuta matatu tupu okuno vavo kuna kughamba ira momu kava ghambanga kehe ngura-ngura.

083 Vashe va Manongo na Manongo nko kuyenda mu wiya vaka papare maghuta gha ngonga, okuno vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

084 "Kwaka, kwakata makuha ghange ----" [Rg or R] dogoro ku katika munda yalimu tondo.

Rg or R

085 Vashe va Manongo nko kuvareka kuronda okuno vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

086 "Kuthina nawa-nawa, kusuruka, na unongo ----" [Rg or R] dogoro ku katika ku limutunguru.

\*\*\*\*\*

079 Manongo's father then waited till all the people slept then he started to boil the eggs.

080 In the night he took the eggs off the fire and ate them all with the exception of three.

081 Then Manongo's father went to chop wood and made fires in various places and left footprints around each.

082 When it became morning, Manongo's father took only the three eggs to his wife saying as he had come to say every morning.

083 Manongo and his father went in to the veld searching for the eggs of an eagle. As they were walking, Manongo's father sang:

084 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals, ----" till they came under the huge tree.

085 Manongo's father started climbing up while singing:

086 "I am climbing up with consideration in order to climb down in peace, ----" till he reached the huge nest.

Rg or R

087 Nko kujuida marumpandi na maghuta ano nko kugha  
vhughumena Manongo oghu gha tateliro munda ya limutondo.

088 Vashe va Manongo nko kuvareka kumina maghuta agha gha  
hupiromo mu litunguru, ano kuya damuna weno, hawe nge tsho ku  
nyara ina kakatere.

089 Vashe va Manongo nko ku bwayamo:

T

090 "Tshutshu, kalindjangili, ku kora, kalindjangili ----"

Rg or R

091 Manongo nko kutantera vashe:

092 "Anwe vave, nganderenuko maghuta niya mine, ano apa niya  
kuta, nimupe lighano."

093 Vashe va Manongo nko kuganda maghuta, ano apa gha kutire  
Manongo, nko kughamba:

094 "Anwe vava, shitoghonenu ku mutavi shi myoke."

095 Vashe va Manongo nko kushitoghona ku mutavi ano ashi  
myoka.

\*\*\*\*\*

087 He filled the baskets with eggs and then tossed them to  
Manongo who was waiting underneath.

088 Manongo's father started to gobble the eggs which  
remained in the huge nest but as he was picking up an egg, a  
scorpion grabbed his finger stinging him. (q)(r)

089 Manongo's father screamed:

090 "It's sore! kalindjangili, ow! kalindjangili, ----".

091 Manongo said to his father:

092 "Father, let down some eggs to me so that I may also  
gobble them and when I am full I will give you advice."

093 Manongo's father let down some eggs to Manongo who  
gobbled them and when he became full, he said:

094 "Father, beat it against a branch so that it can  
spatter."

095 Manongo's father hit it against a branch and it  
spattered.

\*\*\*\*\*

(q) The scorpion is the first dry land animal to be placed  
in the nest.

(r) Tsho, the word meaning sting, is onomatopoeia representing  
the sound made by the scorpion driving in its sting.

096 Nko ku vareka kugcumpuka okuno vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

097 "Kuthina nawa-nawa, kusuruka na unongo ----" [Rg or R] dogoro kuya tika palivhu.

Rg or R

098 Nko kudamuna marumpandi gha maghuta vaka yende ku mundi okuno vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

099 "Kwaka, kwakata, makuha ghange, kwaka, kwakata, makuha ghange ----" [Rg or R] dogoro ku mundi.

Rg or R

100 Vashe va Manongo nko kutaterera dogoro vantu navanshe vana pwere muturo ntani vana ku vareka kutereka maghuta.

101 Pa kashi ka matiku nko ku tentura ano vashe va Manongo nko kulya maghuta naghanshe ku hupitapo matatu tupu.

102 Vashe va Manongo nko kuyenda vaka tshave vikuni ano nko kuya vankeda madiko gha mangi na kuyendaura kuntere dagho.

103 Pa kukya liyuva mukadi ku mutwarera maghuta matatu tupu okuno vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kughamba ira momu kavaghambanga kehe ngura-ngura.

104 Mukadi nko kuvi pura.

\*\*\*\*\*

096 He started climbing down while singing:

097 "I climbed up with consideration in order to climb down in peace, ----" till he reached the ground.

098 They picked up the baskets filled with eggs and went home. Manongo's father sang:

099 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals, ----" till they came home.

100 Manongo's father waited till all the people were asleep then he started boiling the eggs.

101 In the middle of the night Manongo's father took the boiling eggs from the fire and ate all of them with the exception of three.

102 Manongo's father went to chop wood and made fires in various places and left footprints around each.

103 When it became morning the wife was given only three eggs while Manongo's father said as he used to say every morning.

104 The wife believed it.

105 Manongo na vashe nko kuyenda vaka papare maghuta gha ngonga.

106 Mu kuyenda vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

107 "Kwaka, kwakata, makuha ghange ---- "[Rg or R] dogoro ku katika munda ya limutondo."

Rg or R

108 Pa kuronda vashe va Manongo nko kuvareka kuyimba:

T

109 "Kuthina nawa-nawa, kusuruka na unongo ---- "[Rg or R] dogoro ku katika ku litunguru lyambu maghuta.

Rg or R

110 Nko kuywida marumpandi ano nko kugha yangera Manongo oghu gha tatiliro munda agha kaghure.

111 Vashe va Manongo nko kuvareke kumina agha gha hupiramo mu litungura ano mu kudamaghura hawe likangara kaki ku nyara.

112 Vashe va Manongo nko kubwayamo vatakume:

T

113 "Tshutshu, kalindjangili, mawene, kalindjangili, ----"

\*\*\*\*\*

105 Manongo and his father went to search for the eggs of an eagle.

106 As they were walking Manongo's father sang:

107 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals, ----" till they came under that huge tree.

108 As Manongo's father climbed up into that tree he sang:

109 "I am climbing up with consideration in order to climb down in peace, ----" till he reached the huge nest filled with eggs.

110 He filled the baskets with eggs and tossed them to Manongo who was waiting underneath.

111 Manongo's father started to gobble the eggs which remained in the huge nest but as he was picking up an egg, a lizard bit onto his finger. (s)(t)

112 Manongo's father screamed:

113 "It's sore! kalindjangili, ow! kalindjangili, ----"

\*\*\*\*\*

(s) The lizard is the second dry land creature in the nest.

(t) Kaki, is onomatopoeia and represents the sound of teeth clamping into their prey.

Rg or R

114 Manongo nko kutantera vashe:

115 "Anwe vave,nganderenuko maghuta name niya mine,ano apa niya kuta,niya mupe lighano."

116 Vashe va Manongo nko kuganda maghuta,ano apa gha kutire Manongo,nko kutantera vashe:

117 "Anwe vava,shitoghonenu ku mutavi shidjupukeko ku nyara yenu."

118 Vashe va Manongo nko kushitoghona ku mutavi ano ashi djupukako ku nyara.

119 Mu kugcumpuka vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

120 "Kuthina nawa-nawa,kusuruka na unongo ---- "[Rg or R] dogoro kuya tika palivhu.

Rg or R

121 Nko kudamuna marumpandi vaka yende ku mudi okuno vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

122 "Kwaka,kwakata, makuha ghange,kwaka,kwakata,makuha ghange ..."[Rg or R] dogoro kuya tika ku mudi.

\*\*\*\*\*

114 Manongo then said to his father:

115 "Father, let down some eggs to me so that I also may gobble them and when I am full I will give you advice."

116 Manongo's father let down some eggs to Manongo who gobbled them and when he became full he told his father:

117 "Father, beat it against a branch so that it will let go of your finger."

118 Manongo's father hit it against a branch and it let go of his finger.

119 While climbing down, Manongo's father sang:

120 "I climbed up with consideration in order to climb down in peace,....." till he reached the ground.

121 They picked up the baskets to go home. Manongo's father sang:

122 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals,----" till they came home.

Rg or R

123 Ku ngurova vayuvheko ndimba kuna ku morora.

124 Apa ghangenine mu mudi mwene ndimba,nko kutanta ashi:

125 "Nkwilikwande ame kuna ya tupu niya mukengerepo morwashi rushima runa nenepa."

126 Vashe va Manongo nko kulimburura ashi:

127 "Weyo nawa unene,morwashi natwe kare twaku hura."

128 Vashe va Manongo nko kuka yarera ndimba mu ndunda eyi ya kaliro ure na ku livango eli kava terekeranga maghuta.

129 Ngurova ndjoyinya apa aka vyukire ngonga nko kuyenda aka yite nkaka ano kuya mutura kunshi ya maghuta yendi.

\*\*\*\*\*

123 That evening they heard a hare's greeting.(u)

124 When the hare's entered it said:

125 "Uncle, I came to visit you because it is now a long time since I have seen you and my longing to see you was increasing.

126 Manongo's father answered:

127 "It is very kind of you, we have also wanted to see you."

128 Manongo's father went to a hut which stood far from the place where he always boiled eggs, to make a bed for the hare.(v)

129 That same evening when the eagle came back, it went to fetch a pangolin and put him under the eggs.(w)

\*\*\*\*\*

(u) Hares are common in folk stories of the Kavango as elsewhere. Unlike the jackal who always appears in the folkstories as sly and cunning, the hare is always intelligent and disillusions or discovers the cunning ways of those cheating others. Hares are believed to be nature's detectives. The appearances of the Hare in this story before crisis events and his playing on his musical instrument which seems to have a power, is characteristic of hares in the folkstories.

(v) A welcome guest would be placed close to the host.

(w) The pangolin (the scaly anteater),the third dry land creature to be placed in the nest,is very important in the culture of the Kavango people.It was commonly supposed that pangolins are much stronger than elephants.Male babies would,in the past,have a piece of a pangolin scale on a string around the neck or around the hips.Only adult males who have a male first born child are permitted to eat the pangolin.Mary Douglas, writing about the significance of the

130 Dogoro vantu kuna ku rara ntani vana ku vareka vashe va Manongo ku tereka maghuta.

131 Ndimba naye nko kuya na ndingo yendi ano kuya nyotomana ku lidiko okuno uye kuna kuveta:

T + ONOMATOPOEIA

132 "Ndingorondi,kadimba ndi,Ndingorondi,kadimba ndi,Ndingorondi,kadimba ndi,Ndingorondi,kadimba ndi."

Rg or R

133 Pa kashi ka matiku vashe va Manongo nko kupura:

134 "Aghuve ndimba,ameshi una mono oko naku yarere,nke una kudira ku karara?"

135 Ndimba nko kulimburura:

136 "Na monoko vene,ano ngoli morwashi kare na muhura nkwilikwande,mbyo ngoli naku shungulira dogoro mpopo aka rarera nkwilikwande."

\*\*\*\*\*

130 When people went to sleep Manongo's father started to boil the eggs.

131 The hare came near to the boiling eggs and sat on its haunches while it played:

132 "Ndingorondi, hare, ndi, ndingorondi, hare, ndi."(x)

133 In the middle of the night Manongo's father said:

134 "Hey hare! did you not see where I made a bed for you, why are you not going to sleep?"

135 The hare answered:

136 "I have seen but since I have visited uncle after a long time, I prefer to sit till my uncle goes to bed."

\*\*\*\*\*

(w) cont.

pangolin among the Lele people of Zaire,says that the pangolin fits no ordinary category of animal and as such represents a sort of threat to order.(Douglas 1969)

(x) Hare plays on his musical instrument a ritual song. He sings in Thimbukushu."Ndingorondi..." represents the sound of the instrument. According to the research done by Bosch, the Vasambyu borrowed this musical instrument from the Kwambi, one of the tribes in present day Ovambo. It is a form of thumb piano made out of a board with a hole in the centre, measures about 20 cm by 8 cm.It has nine to twelve long keys.Keys are plucked with the thumbs.It is played without a resonator but a gourd is usually held lightly underneath the board while playing.



137 Vashe va Manongo nko kughamba:

138 "Ame kapi nika rara wangu ndi una yendi tupu uka rare."

139 Ndimba nko kulimburura:

140 "Name kuni shungira tupu."

141 Vaha hokwera muku ghambaura hawe vikondomboro:

142 "kere - keke, kere - keke."

143 Vashe va Manongo nko kushapuka vaka yende kundunda yavo vaka rare.

144 Ngura-ngura ndimba nko kuvareka kutapera maghuta ano mukadi ali akuta.

145 Apa ghatwalire ndimba maghuta ghamwe ku vashe va Manongo, vashe va Manongo ava kamu tshida okuno vavo kuna kughamba:

146 "Vitware kunya vighuta vya kuroromena!"

147 Vashe va Manongo nko kutantera monavo Manongo:

148 "Manongo, shapuka tuka papare ku maghuta ano apa tuka vyuka ame kapi nashana kuya mona nka vigenda vya kubakuruka mamutwi."

\*\*\*\*\*

137 Manongo's father said:

138 "I will not be going to bed for some time."

139 The hare answered:

140 "If that is the case, I would prefer to sit up also."

141 While they were arguing the cocks began to crow:

142 "Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

143 Manongo's father then stood up and went into the hut to sleep.

144 In the morning the hare started to divide the eggs (among the people) and the wife ate till she was full.

145 When the hare took some eggs to Manongo's father, he (hare) was chased away by Manongo's father who said:

146 "Take them away, those eggs have boiled very hard!"

147 Manongo's father then said to his son, Manongo:

148 "Manongo, get up so that we may go searching for eggs. When we return I don't want to see here guests with long ears."

149 Mu kuyenda vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

150 "Kwaka, kwakata, makuha ghange, kwaka, kwakata, makuha ghange ----" [Rg or R] dogoro kuya tika munda ya limutondo.

Rg or R

151 Mu kuronda vashe va Manongo vavo kuna kuyimba:

T

152 "Kuthina nawa-nawa, kusuruka na unongo ----" [Rg or R] dogoro ku katika ku litunguru lya mbu maghuta.

Rg or R

153 Nko kuywida marumpandi na maghuta, nko kugha yangera Manongo oghu gha tateliro munda.

154 Vashe va Manongo nko kuvareka ku mina agha ghahupiromo mu litunguru ano mukudamaura nko kuyweka like nalinshe mu nkata ya nkaka, ano nkaka nko kudingira like ali rambakane ku mutavi.

155 Vashe va Manongo nko ku bwayamo:

T

156 "Tshutshu! kalindjangili, mawene! kalindjangili, nithiye! kalindjangili, pa wiho! kalindjangili, pa noko! kalindjangili!"

Rg or R

157 Nkaka nko kuvareka kuyimba:

\*\*\*\*\*

149 As they were walking Manongo's father sang:

150 "Kwaka-kwakata my sandals, ---" till they came under that huge tree.

151 As he was climbing up Manongo's father sang:

152 "I climb up with consideration in order to climb down in peace, ----" till he reached the huge nest filled with eggs.

153 He then filled the baskets with eggs and tossed them down to Manongo who was waiting underneath.

154 Manongo's father started gobbling the eggs which remained in the huge nest but as he was picking up the eggs he pushed his hand into a coiled up pangolin which immediately trapped his hand against a branch.

155 Manongo's father screamed:

156 "It's sore! kalindjangili, ow! kalindjangili, let it go! kalindjangili, for the sake of your father! kalindjangili, for the sake of your mother! kalindjangili."

157 The pangolin then started calling the eagle in song:

T

T

158 "Mbambanyunyi - mbambanyunyi, nakwata me,nakwata,  
mbambanyunyi - mbambanyunyi, nakwata me,nakwata,  
mbambanyunyi muyero wa rushwayera mayimbo, mbambanyunyi  
muyero warutendera mayimbo.

Rg or R

159 Ku ure-ure ngonga alimburura muku yimba:

160 "Kwata,kwaterera!"

.....  
There are three versions of the next section.The first  
version is as follows:

.....  
Rutimwilitito Rwa Kuhova

Rg or R

1-161 Ngoweyo vya yendire dogoro ngonga ana yatiki:

\*\*\*\*\*

158 "Eagle-eagle, I have caught him, I have caught him,  
eagle-eagle, I have caught him, I have caught him. The  
eagle is indulgent it threshes for the people, the eagle is  
soft it breaks open shells for the people." (y)

159 From a far distance the eagle answered in song:

160 "Catch him, catch him very tight!" (z)

.....  
There are three versions of the next section.The first  
version is as follows: (a):

.....  
1-161 This scene lasted until the eagle reached the place  
when it screeched:

\*\*\*\*\*

(y) The fieldwork revealed that the name "mbambanyunyi" is the name especially given to the giant eagle the Hambukushu found in the Kavango. The present day understanding of the name "mbambanyunyi" refers to a specific type of eagle which is properly called "nkumbi-nkumbi". As these birds became scarce the people applied the name "mbambanyunyi" to a type of hawk called "ngonga" but the sense of eagle still remains. The same word has been translated once as soft and once as indulgent for the sense is indulgent to the point almost of stupidity. This probably reflects the long series of little more than warnings given to Manongo's father which are now at an end, but also the quality of divine graciousness associated with the eagle. The actual referents of threshing and breaking open eggs by the eagle are unclear

(z) The eagle answers in Rugciriku or Rusambyu.

(a) The provenance of the versions was dealt with earlier.

1-162 "Koli-koli-koli-koli!" okuno uye kuna kubabaghura vashe va Manongo rucene-rucene.

1-163 Pa kumana kubabaghura vashe va Manongo, ngonga nko kutuka aka yende ku shirongo sha hanayivira.

1-164 Manongo nko ku upa liwe lya utwe arenge ko nyama ku matungi gha vashe.

1-165 Nko kuyi twarera vawina ava tantere ashi nyama ya horongo ano vashe ndi kasha aka ye nawo liyuva lya ku kwamako.

\*\*\*\*\*

1-162 "Coli,coli,coli!" while it tore Manongo's father to pieces.<sup>(b)</sup>

1-163 When it had finished tearing Manongo's father, the eagle disappeared to the unknown country.<sup>(c)</sup>

1-164 Manongo then took a sharp stone and cut some pieces of meat out of the legs of his father.<sup>(d)</sup>

1-165 He took that meat to his mother and told her that it was that of a kudu and that he would come back with his father the following day.

\*\*\*\*\*

(b) Coli,coli... is the cry of the eagle.

(c) Although the eagle is supposed to kill Manongo's father bodily, it is commonly accepted that the eagle had taken something of Manongo's father to the unknown country. In another version this is clear for the eagle carries Manongo's father body and soul to the unknown country.

(d) Two interrelated and important ideas would be clear to the hearers in this next section and in those of the alternative versions. These are the failure of the eldest son to take the leadership on the death or disappearance of the father and the continuity between the father and the child still in the womb.

On his way home carrying his father's flesh, (eggs in the second version) Manongo is expected to take over the ritual singing. Traditionally, after the death of the father, the eldest son will take the leading position. That Manongo failed to take such a leading position is notable and of cardinal importance for the understanding of the story.

The flesh of the father eaten by the mother indicates that the unborn son takes over something from the father. He takes over the father's leadership. During the ritual in which a new leader is installed something belonging to the previous leader is always given to his successor. Nothing could belong quite as clearly as this does.

1-166 Va wina va Manongo nko kutereka nyama inya ano nko kulya ava kuta.

1-167 Manongo nko kughamba:

1-168 "Anwe na, weni tupu nyama utovara sha?"

1-169 Vanyina nko kulimburura:

1-170 "Utovara ngudungudu monande."

1-171 Manongo nko kutantera ushiri vanyina:

1-172 "Anwe na,va vava kapi nka ngamu vamonu,oyo nyama muna li ne yava vava ava ana kadipagha ngonga."

1-173 Va wina va Manongo nko kughupa muhombo ashi vakutwe palikovu vafe.

1-174 Manongo nko kuva shakana muhombo ano nko kuyenda kwa ka kurukadi aka pureko lighano.

1-175 Apa aka tikire kwa kakurukadi,Manongo aghamba ashi:

\*\*\*\*\*

1-166 His mother cooked that meat and ate till she was full.

1-167 Manongo then said:

1-168 "Mother, did that meat taste very nice?"

1-169 His mother answered:

1-170 "It tasted very nice, my son."

1-171 Manongo then told his mother the whole truth:

1-172 "Mother,you will never see my father again,that meat you have eaten was his meat. The eagle has killed him."

1-173 Manongo's mother took a big wooden needle and wanted to stab it into her navel to die.

1-174 Manongo took away the wooden needle from his mother and went to consult an old woman.<sup>(e)</sup>

1-175 When he came to the old woman, Manongo said:

\*\*\*\*\*

(e) Old women are important in the myths and stories of the Kavango people.They are a symbol of wisdom,experience and cultural continuity and solutions to all problems.

1-176 "Kakurukadi, vanane lira lyavo lina kuru ngoli ano apa navatantere ashi nyama yava vava vana li, kuna ku shana kuku dipagha, weni-weni omu niva popera?"

1-177 Kakurukadi nko kughamba:

1-178 "Yenda uka time ndandani ya muce uya yi yote mu mundiro ano uya yishepure vanyoko mu ntambo."

1-179 Manongo nko kuyenda mu wiya aka time ndandani ya muce ano nko kuya yi yota mu mundiro.

1-180 Apa ya pyapyalire yene ndandani, Manongo nko kutantera va wina:

1-181 "Anwe na, kuyengururenu mu nyongame."

1-182 Va wina va Manongo nko kuku yengurura ano nko kunyongama.

\*\*\*\*\*

1-176 "Old woman, my mother's pregnancy is full term and when I told her that the meat she ate was that of my father, she wanted to kill herself, what am I going to do to save her life?"

1-177 The old woman said:

1-178 "Go and dig out a root of muce and put it in the fire and after that you must beat it between your mother's legs."

1-179 Manongo went into the veld to dig out a root of muce and put it into the fire. (f)

1-180 When the root became hot enough Manongo told his mother:

1-181 "Mother, you must undress yourself and bend down."

1-182 Manongo's mother undressed herself and bent down.

\*\*\*\*\*

(f) The "muce" root in those times was of cardinal importance in the maturation of the young bulls: The "muce" root would be put in a fire early in the morning. When it became hot a man took it and rushed to the kraal of the cattle where he struck the still sleeping young bulls on the back with it. When this process had been repeated several times the young bulls started to make noises early in the morning and became aggressive to anyone who would dare to approach them. This was done to make the bulls fearless in order to protect the cows and calves against wild animals. The connection of this to the unborn child would be clear.

1-183 Manongo nko kuva shepuru na ndandani ya muce ya upwi mu kashi ka maghuru ano "cu!" kare Tjakova ana vatuka mulira lya vanyina na uta wendi wa nkandya.

1-184 Tjakova nko kupura:

1-185 "Kuni oku vayenda va vava?"

1-186 Manongo nko kulimburu:

1-187 "Ava dipagha ngonga."

1-188 Tjakova nko kutanta:

\*\*\*\*\*

1-183 Manongo hit her between the legs with that hot muce-root and then "whoosh!" Tjakova with bow and arrow sprang out of the mother's womb. (g)(h)

1-184 Tjakova asked:

1-185 "Where has my father gone?" (i)

1-186 Manongo answered:

1-187 "He was killed by the eagle."

1-188 Tjakova said:

\*\*\*\*\*

(g) Tjakova is not a name in use among the Kavango people. It is believed by them to be a descriptive name meaning intelligent but the present day usual word for intelligent is "ukotoki" or "ndunge". The fieldwork revealed that the translation of Tjakova as intelligent is found among the oldest people of the Hambukushu and Vagciriku. The fieldwork also revealed that Tjakova, in the meaning of intelligent, was likely to be given to something new which occurred. The word seems to have no connection to any other word in the language and may take its meaning from the character in the story rather than being a descriptive name applied to him in the first place.

(h) The words "sprang out of the womb of the mother" would indicate that Tjakova was fully grown.

(i) This verse is notable. Tjakova speaks as if Manongo has some other father. Brother would not speak so to brother. Manongo is by the statement excluded from the claim of being the son of Tjakova's father. This verse is very important as indicating the social inversion that occurs as Manongo accepts the leadership of his younger brother.

1-189 "Kuna kuva shupura oku vayenda!"

.....  
A SECOND VERSION CONTINUES FROM VERSE 160 AS FOLLOWS:  
.....

Rutimwilitito Rwa Uvili Rg or R

2-161 Ngoweyo vyayendire dogoro ngonga ana yatiki:

2-162 "Koli-koli-koli-koli!" nko kuva damuna vashe va Manongo  
ava tware ku shirongo sha hana yivira.

2-163 Manongo nko kudamuna marumpandi gha maghuta nko  
kuyenda ku mudi.

2-164 Apa aka tikire ku mudi vanyina nko kutereka maghuta  
ano apa vamanine kulya mpo a ghambire Manongo.

2-165 "Anwe na,va vava ne ana kadamuna ngonga."

2-166 Apa ghavi yuvhire mukadi nko ku upa muhombo ashi aku  
twe pa likovhu afe.

2-167 Manongo nko kuva shakama muhombo ano nko kuyenda kwa  
kakurukadi.

\*\*\*\*\*

1-189 "I am going to follow him wherever he has gone." (j)

.....  
A SECOND VERSION DIFFERS FROM THE FIRST AS FOLLOWS:  
.....

2-161 That scene lasted until the eagle came to the place:

2-162 "Coli, coli, coli!" it screeched and picked up  
Manongo's father and took him away to the unknown country.

2-163 Manongo picked up the baskets filled with eggs and  
went home.

2-164 When he reached home his mother boiled the eggs and  
after she had eaten them, Manongo said:

2-165 "Mother, my father has been picked up by the eagle."

2-166 When the wife heard that sad news, she took a big  
wooden needle and wanted to stab it into her navel and die.

2-167 Manongo took the wooden needle away from his mother  
and went to an old woman.

\*\*\*\*\*

(j) This verse is a turning point in the story. Tjakova's  
determination not to return home but to follow his father  
wherever he has gone, ends the static situation or repeating  
cycles and develops a goal as Tjakova starts his quest.



2-168 Apa aka tikire kwa kakurukadi Manongo nko kutantashi:

2-169 "Ove kakurukadi, vanane kuna kushana kuku dipagha apa vana juvhu ashi va vava ana kava damuna ngonga, weni omu nipopera liparu lya vanane?"

2-170 Kakurukadi nko kughamba:

2-171 "Yenda uka time ndandani ya muce ano uya yi yote pa mundiro uya yishepuilite vanyoko muntambo."

2-172 Manongo nko kuyenda mu wiya aka time ndandani ya muce ano nko kuya yi yota pa mundiro.

2-173 Apa ya yenyine yene ndandani ya muce, Manongo nko kutantera vanyina:

2-174 "Anwe na, kuyengururenu mu nyongame."

2-175 Va wina va Manongo nko kuku yengurura ano ava nyongama.

2-176 Manongo nko kuva shepura vanyina na ndandani ya upwi ya muce mu ntambo ano "cu!" kare Tjakova ana rupuka mu lira lya vanyima na uta wa nkandja.

2-177 Tjakova nko kupura:

\*\*\*\*\*

2-168 When Manongo came to the old woman, he said:

2-169 "Old woman, my mother, after hearing that my father had been picked up by the eagle and carried away, wants to commit suicide, what am I going to do to save my mother's life?"

2-170 The old woman said:

2-171 "Go and dig out a root of muce and put it into fire. After that beat it between the legs of your mother."

2-172 Manongo went into the veld and dug out a root of muce and put it into the fire.

2-173 When the root became hot enough Manongo told his mother:

2-174 "Mother, you must undress yourself and bend down."

2-175 Manongo's mother undressed herself and bent down.

2-176 Manongo struck with the hot root of muce between the legs of mother and "whoosh" Tjakova, with a bow and arrow, sprang out of his mother's womb.

2-177 Tjakova asked:

2-178 "Kuni oku vayenda va vava?"

2-179 Manongo nko kulimburura:

2-180 "Ava damuna ngonga."

2-181 Tjakova nko kutanta:

2-182 "Kuna kuva shupura oku vayenda."

.....  
A THIRD VERSION CONTINUES FROM VERSE 160 AS FOLLOWS:  
.....

Rutimwitilito Rwa Utatu Rg or R

3-161 Ngoweyo vya yendire dogoro ngonga ana yatiki:

3-162 "Koli-koli,koli-koli!"nko kuva damuna vashe va Manongo  
ava tware ku shirongo sha vangonga.

3-163 Apa aka tikire Manongo ku mudi,ku kawana vanyima vana  
shampuruka lighuta lya linene.

3-164 Apa lya kokire linya lighuta,makura ali kutende a  
rupukamo Tjakova na uta wendi wa nkandja.

\*\*\*\*\*

2-178 "Where has my father gone?"

2-179 Manongo answered:

2-180 "He was picked up and taken away by the eagle."

2-181 Tjakova said:

2-182 "I am following him wherever he has gone."

.....  
A THIRD VERSION DIFFERS FROM THE OTHERS AS FOLLOWS:  
.....

3-161 That scene lasted until the eagle came to that place:

3-162 "Coli-coli-coli!" it screeched and picked up  
Manongo's father and took him away to the country of the  
eagles.

3-163 When Manongo came home he found that his mother had  
given birth to a big egg.<sup>(k)</sup>

3-164 When the egg was in full term it burst open and  
Tjakova came out with a bow and arrow.

\*\*\*\*\*

(k) In this version Tjakova is more closely related to the  
eagle than in the other versions because he came out of the  
egg which is itself somehow related to the eagle's eggs.

3-165 Tjakova nko kupura:

3-166 "Kuni oku vayenda va vava?"

3-167 Manongo nko kulimbura:

3-168 "Ava damuna ngonga atwara ku shirongo sha vangonga."

3-169 Tjakova nko kughamba:

3-170 "Kuna kuyenda nishupure oku va vatwara."

## PART II

Rg or R

190 Tjakova na Manongo na ndimba nko kuvareka ruyendo.

191 Mukuyenda Tjakova uye kuna kuyimba:

192 [Tj] "Mwayile tata,[T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo; [Tj] mwayile tata, [T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo;Manongo muyero,mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo;athiya tata,mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo;kurepete kumane mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo;nko nikakundame, mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo."

\*\*\*\*\*

3-165 Tjakova asked:

3-166 "Where has my father gone?"

3-167 Manongo answered:

3-168 "He has been picked up by the eagle who carried him to the country of the eagles."

3-169 Tjakova said:

3-170 "I am following him wherever it took him."

## PART II (1)

190 Tjakova, Manongo and the hare started the journey.

191 As they were walking Tjakova sang:(m)

192 "Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there, where my father has gone, eagle lead me there, Manongo is stupid, eagle lead me there, he left my father, eagle lead me there, however far it might be, eagle lead me there, I will come there, eagle lead me there."

\*\*\*\*\*

(1) PART II begins the journey.

(m) As the leader,Tjakova took over the role of ritual singing: He sings the ritual song in Tshiwiko or Runyemba as it is called in Kavango, one of the languages of Angola. When he speaks it is a mix of Thimbukushu (or Rumbukushu as it is called in the other Kavango languages), Rugciriku and Rusambyu.

R or Rg

193 nko kuyatika pa mundi wa shimbungu.

194 Tjakova nko kughamba:

195 "Anwe va shimbungu,vinke mutu yumburako?"

196 Shimbungu nko kuvhunduruka okuno uye kuna ku kumba:

ONOMATOPOEIA

197 "Howi! Howi! Howi! Howi!"

R or Rg

198 Pa kuyatika shimbungu nko kutambeka Tjakova vipapa na vigorogogo okuno uye kuna kughamba:

199 "Avihuru mbyo naka wanako ame ghu na karerango ku kunka ku mandi mu kupapara vipapa na vigorogogo."

\*\*\*\*\*

193 They came to the home of a hyena.(n)

194 Tjakova said:

195 "Hyena, what can you offer us to eat?"(o)

196 The hyena ran off making howling sounds:(p)

197 "Haun-wee! haun-wee! haun-wee! haun-wee!"(q)

198 When he came back he gave Tjakova old skins and old bones saying:

199 "That is all that I can offer you I am a person who usually runs around homes to look for old skins and bones."(r)

\*\*\*\*\*

(n) Hyena is understood to be a stupid, cowardly animal in the Kavango myths and stories. Moreover he is understood to be a gatherer of old stuff and everything left by others.

(o) The polite plural form of you, always used when speaking to an older stranger, is used at each meeting with an animal.

(p) The Kavango languages have different words for how each animal moves at speed and not all have equivalents in English so run has been used to translate them all.

(q) Hyena could not sing but made stereotype stupid sounds.

(r) Hyena would be clearly understood to represent scavenging

200 Tjakova nko kulimburura:

201 "Vitwarenu kunya."

202 Manongo nko kughamba:

203 "Yitenu kuno tu vihepurure."

204 Pa kumana kulya Manongo vipapa na vigorogogo, ruyendo nko kutwikira ku uto.

205 Mu kuyenda Tjakova uye kuna kuyimba:

206 [Tj] "Mwayile tata, [T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo; [Tj] mwayile tata, [T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo;----", [Rg or R] dogoro kuya tika mu mudi wa mbwawa.

Rg or R

207 Tjakova nko kughamba:

208 "Anwe va mbwawa, vinke mutu yumburako?"

209 Mbawawa nko kuvhunduruka aka duke mu vishwa okuno uye kuna kuyimba:

\*\*\*\*\*

200 Tjakova said:

201 "Take them away." (s)

202 Manongo said:

203 "Give them to me so that I can make use of them."

204 When Manongo finished eating the old skins and bones, the journey continued.

205 While walking Tjakova sang:

206 "Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there,----", till they came to the home of a jackal. (t)

207 Tjakova said:

208 "Jackal what can you offer us to eat?"

209 Jackal ran into the bushes while he sang:

\*\*\*\*\*

(s) Tjakova politely refused what the hyena offered him. Manongo, remaining at one with scavenging, accepted what the hyena gave.

(t) Jackals also play major roles in the myths and stories of the Kavango people. Jackals are not strong but cunning enough to mislead wolves, giants, lions and other animals but they are believed not to be as intelligent as hares.

T

210 "Atwe va mbwawa ku kutota, atwe va mbwawa ku kutota, dimango dikuru, ku kutota, dimango dikuru, ku kutota."

Rg or R

211 Mbawawa nko ku kayita litenga lya mbu ukekete okuno uye kuna kughamba:

212 "Avihuru mbyo tuna kawanako atwe va twa karerango kundjandjana mu maukekete."

213 Tjakova nko kulimburura:

214 "Vitwarenu kunya."

215 Manongo nko kughamba:

216 "Yitenu kuno tu vihepurure."

217 Pa kumana kulya Manongo, ruyendo aru twikire ku uto.

218 Vavo kwa kalire ngoli, Tjakova, Manongo, ndimba, shimbungu na mbwawa.

219 Mu kuyenda Tjakova uye kuna kuyimba:

\*\*\*\*\*

210 "We jackals can range around, we jackals can range around, the elder (son) is stupid, we can range around, the elder (son) is stupid, we can range around." (u)

211 Jackal brought a bucket filled with berries saying: (v)

212 "That is all that I found I am a person who usually runs through the bushes of berries."

213 Tjakova said:

214 "Take them away." (w)

215 Manongo said:

216 "Give them to me so that I can make use of them."

217 When Manongo finished eating, the journey continued.

218 They were now Tjakova, Manongo, hare, hyena and jackal.

219 While walking Tjakova sang:

\*\*\*\*\*

(u) Jackal, who is a gatherer, sings in Thimbukushu of Manongo's stupidity, probably for accepting hyena's scraps.

(v) The bucket referred to is carved out of a piece of tree.

(w) Tjakova refuses the offering of the gatherer also.

220 [Tj] "Mwayile tata, [T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo; [Tj] mwayile tata,[T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo;.....",[Rg or R] dogoro kuya tika mu mudi wa nyime.

Rg or R

221 Tjakova nko kughamba:

222 "Anwe va nyime,nke mutu yumburako?"

223 Nyime nko kuyukura aka ngandure ayende mu wiya okuno uye kuna kuyimba:

T

224 "Niyende mu wiya,oko nko nikawana,oko nko nikawana, muyusharo wa vakongo,oko nko nikawana,oko nko nikawana, mughunyu wande mandwara,oko nko nikawana,oko nko nikawana, ove nshefu yatu yende,oko nko nikawana,oko nko nikawana, ove nshefu yatu yende,oko nko nikawana,oko nko nikawana."

Rg or R

225 Pa ku kavyuka,nyime nko kughamba:

\*\*\*\*\*

220 "Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there,-----", till they came to the home of a lion.(x)

221 Tjakova said:

222 "Lion what can you offer us to eat?"

223 Lion ran into the forest while he sang:

224 "I must go into the forest,there I will find, there I will find,the lunch of the hunters, there I will find, there I will find;my children are my claws,there I will find, there I will find,that's you eland,let's go! there I will find,there I will find,that's you eland,let's go!there I will find,there I will find." (y)

225 When lion came back he said:

\*\*\*\*\*

(x) Lions are sometimes called by the Kavango people,"the owners of the veld".It is generally accepted that lions are hunters who like to kill and eat fresh meat.

(y) Lion sings in Rugciriku or Rusambyu with reference to his duty as a hunter.The reference by lion to children as claws is still unclear even after extensive enquiry.Young men do,of course,hunt for the benefit of the community.The verse would be understood to refer to the hunting aspect of the culture which can be individual or involve all the active members of the community acting together.

226 "Homba,walye ku mutuma vakwami venu vaka muyitire ka mbambi ghona aka tuna kamu wanenako atwe va twa karerango ku ngandura mu dimutitu."

227 Vakwami va Tjakova nko kuyenda mu wiya ano ku kawana vanshefu tupu ana varapeke nyime.

228 Kupapaura ano nyama kuyi yita kwa Tjakova,ano Tjakova nko kutambura.

229 Ruyendo nko kutwikira ku uto,ano vavo kwa kalire ngoli,Tjakova,Manongo,ndimba,shimbungu,mbwawa na nyime.

230 Mu kuyenda Tjakova uye kuna kuyimba:

231 [Tj] "Mwayile tata, [T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo; [Tj] mwayile tata, [T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo;----",[Rg or R] dogoro ku yatika ku mudi wa nshanda.

\*\*\*\*\*

226 "Chief, you may send your people into the forest to fetch a small antelope I caught for you;I am a person who usually runs in the forests." (z)

227 Tjakova's followers went into the forest and found many elands killed by the lion.

228 When they had butchered the dead elands they took the meat to Tjakova who accepted it. (a)

229 The journey continued and they were now Tjakova, Manongo, hare, hyena, jackal and lion.

230 While walking Tjakova sang:

231 "Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there,----," till they came to the home of a honeybear. (b)

\*\*\*\*\*

(z) It is typical of the Kavango hunter's humbleness when he has killed a big animal that he will go home and tell people to fetch a small or a baby antelope instead of saying proudly that he killed a big one. Elands are the largest of the African antelopes and an important hunter would kill them because their meat is highly regarded.

(a) Tjakova accepted the offering of the hunter.

(b) Honeybear is generally believed to be tough and to like to eat things nice. In those times a string cut from the skin of a honeybear would be bound around the hip or neck of male babies or used as belts for the small boys to transmit to them the characteristics of the bear.



Rg or R

232 Tjakova nko kughamba:

233 "Anwe va nshanda,vinke mutu yumburako?"

234 Nshanda nkokuvhunduruka aka ngungure ku vighuru okuno uye kuna ku yimba:

T

235 "Shanda -e-uwa wa shanda ku simisa na muromo;shanda -e-uwa wa shanda ku simisa na muromo;shanda -e-uwa wa shanda ku simisa na muromo."

Rg or R

236 Pa ku kavyuka nshanda nko kutambeka Tjakova litenga lya kuyura ushi okuno uye kuna kughamba:

237 "Upenu avihuru mbyo tuna kamu wanenako atwe va twa karerango kungungura ku vighuru."

238 Tjakova nko kutambura ano ava vareke kutwara ruyendo rwavo ku uto.

239 Mu kuyenda Tjakova uye kuna kuyimba:

240 [Tj] "Mwayile tata,[T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,[Tj] mwayile tata,[T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,----"[Rg or R] dogoro kuya tika pa mudi wa kakurukadi.

\*\*\*\*\*

232 Tjakova said:

233 "Honeybear, what can you offer us to eat?"

234 Honeybear ran around old anthills while he sang:

235 "Honeybear-e- the beauty of honeybear is that he digs with his snout, honeybear-e- the beauty of honeybear is that he digs with his snout, honeybear-e- the beauty of honeybear is that he digs with his snout." (c)

236 When he came back he gave Tjakova a bucket filled with honey saying:

237 "Take this it is the only thing I found for you;I am a person who usually runs around anthills."

238 Tjakova accepted the honey and the journey continued.(d)

239 While walking Tjakova sang:

240 "Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there,----," till they came to the home of an old woman.

\*\*\*\*\*

(c) Honeybear sings in Thimbukushu in praise of his digging.

(d) Tjakova accepts honey generally reserved for chiefs.

T (narrative) and R very mixed

241 Tjakova nko kutuma mbwawa aka rombe mundiro.

242 Apa aka tikire mbwawa nko kughamba:

243 "Kakurukadi tupeko mundiro!"

244 Kakurukadi nko kulimburura:

245 "Muhuro wa kare."okuno uye kuna ku negha pa uro.

246 Mbwawa na kakurukadi nko ku kukwara.

247 Apa varorokire ku taterera,Tjakova nko kutantera ndimba ayite mbwawa:

248 Ndimba nko kubwayamo:

249 "Mbwawa ve,yita mundiro."

250 Mbwawa nko kulimburura:

251 "Ntanko vino,ntanko vino!"

\*\*\*\*\*

241 Tjakova sent the jackal to ask for fire.(e)

242 When the jackal arrived at the old woman's (hut), he said:

243 "Old woman give us fire?"

244 The old woman answered:

245 "(I long for) what I tasted many years ago", while she was pointing to the bed.

246 The jackal and the old woman became married.

247 When they became tired of waiting for jackal, Tjakova said to the hare go and call the jackal.

248 The hare shouted:

249 "Jackal bring the fire!"

250 The jackal answered:

251 "Wait a moment, wait a moment!"

\*\*\*\*\*

(e) An old woman appears again in the myth but this time trying to recover the past.Fire will become significant.

252 Ndimba nko kuyenda aka kenge,ano apa vamu monine nko kumu tshida.

253 Ndimba nko kuya upa ndingo yendi aka vete okuno uye kuna kuyimba na kumyaka:

T + ONOMATOPOEIA

254 "Kwili-ndindi-kadimba tambeka,kwili-ndindi-kadimba tambeka."

Rg or R

255 Kakurukadi ku monako nko kuvatuka mu uro aya dane naku kuholita kwa ndimba.

256 Ndimba nko kudamuna shitiki shamundiro aka dukite okuno uye kuna kughamba:

T

257 "Kakurukadi ku uyero!"

Rg or R

258 Tjakova na vakwami vendi nko kughurumuka ku liyenga.

\*\*\*\*\*

252 The hare went to investigate what was going on but when they (jackal and the woman) saw him they chased him away.

253 The hare came back and fetched his musical instrument and went to the entrance of the old woman's hut and began to play while he danced and sang:(f)

254 "Kwili-ndindi-hare,give me,kwili-ndindi-hare,give me."

255 The old woman sprang out of the bed and started dancing around the hare while trying to make love to him.

256 The hare found an opportunity of picking up a piece of burning wood and ran away while he cried:

257 "The old woman is stupid!"

258 Tjakova and his followers went down to the river-crossing.(g)

\*\*\*\*\*

(f) Hare again uses his musical instrument.This verse reflects,as is generally accepted,that jackals are sly and cunning while hares are intelligent and are detectives.

(g) River-crossing here referred to is a small harbour on the river where one can get canoes to cross or from where people usually get water. The plural of the word for river-crossing,liyenga,is mayenga. It is associated with the idea of decoration from kuyenga,to decorate. Mayenga-nyambi is, literally, decoration of god (nyambi=god) and is a common name (specially among the Hambukushu,Vagciriku and Vashambyu) for girls thought beautiful. The moon and stars would no longer be called mayenga-nyambi but a strong feeling of association between this name for a beautiful girl and the heavenly bodies remains. It is almost certain that they were once spoken of as the decoration of god.

259 Pa kuyatika pa liyenga ku yawana vakadona ano Mayenga-Nyambi uye vana kamu horeka.

260 Tjakova nko ku upa ndingo ya ndimba avete okuno uye kuna kuyimba:

T

261 "Kwili-ndindi-ngambi ngani yeka waye, nahora Mayenga-Nyambi mu murete, ngambi ngani yeka waye, nahora Mayenga-Nyambi, mu muyoye, ngambi ngani yeka waye nahora Mayenga-Nyambi."

Rg or R

262 Mayenga-Nyambi nko kuka muyita, ku muyogha ano nko ku kukwara na Tjakova.

263 Tjakova nko ku upa liwe lya utwe a tete rughu aru taghura ano kare runa kara limu wato lya linene.

264 Tjakova na Mayenga-Nyambi na vakwami va Tjakova nko kuronda munya mu liwato.

\*\*\*\*\*

259 When they came to the river-crossing they found there many girls who had hidden Mayenga-Nyambi.

260 Tjakova took the hare's musical-instrument and played on it while he sang:<sup>(h)</sup>

261 "Kwili-ndindi - I will never marry another, I love Mayenga-Nyambi, you must bring her, I will never marry another, I love Mayenga-Nyambi, you must wash her, I will never marry another, I love Mayenga-Nyambi."<sup>(i)</sup>

262 They (the girls) went to fetch Mayenga-Nyambi and washed her and she and Tjakova married.

263 Tjakova took a sharp stone and used it to cut a bamboo which turned into a big boat.

264 Tjakova and Mayenga-Nyambi and Tjakova's followers got into the boat.

\*\*\*\*\*

(h) The musical instrument of the hare appears again as Tjakova, searching to find Mayenga-Nyambi, sings in Thimbukushu.

(i) Mayenga-Nyambi must be prepared for marriage. Tradition in those times prescribed that when a girl experienced her first menstruation she must go into seclusion for several weeks and be rubbed with ashes. At the end of the period of seclusion there would be a ritual dance called "shisho" that lasted through the night. The girl was then washed and presented at the centre of the place where the ritual dance was taking place, and marriage followed.

265 Kakurukadi kumona ashi Tjakova ana kwara Mayenga-Nyambi, nko kutuma mbwawa aka tande Tjakova na lighonga lya shitondo pa mbanda ano Tjakova nko kufa.

266 Tjakova nko ku kamuvhumbeka mu mutitu, ano vakwami vendi na Mayenga-Nyambi nko kudika mundi.

267 Varume kehe pano kuyenda vaka kankare muka momo mu mutitu va vhumbikire Tjakova.

268 Mu kututura vavo kuna kuyimba:

Ru (joined ritual)

269 "Kulima ko ngesi, kulima, kulima ko ngesi, kulima,, kuliteta mutwe, kulima, otetangwire pe rambo, kulima."

Rg or R

270 Ngurova nko kuvyuka ku mundi.

\*\*\*\*\*

265 When the old woman saw that Tjakova had married Mayenga-Nyambi, she prompted jackal to murder Tjakova by stabbing him in his back with a sharp wooden spear, Tjakova died instantly.

266 Tjakova was buried in the forest and his followers, with Mayenga-Nyambi, built a kraal.

267 All the men went every morning into the forest where they had buried Tjakova to cut away trees to prepare for the planting of crops.

268 While cutting trees they sang: (j)

269 "This type of planting, this type of planting, one should cut his own head and cut it into pieces on the grave (of Tjakova)."(k)

270 In the evening they went back home.

\*\*\*\*\*

(j) After the death of Tjakova the group remains without a leader. There is no suggestion that Manongo takes over nor even that anyone becomes a guardian to Mayenga-Nyambi. In a situation where there is no leader all males assume temporary leadership and therefore all together sing the ritual songs. Here we have also moved into an agricultural situation where all would sing while clearing ground, preparing the field and planting.

(k) For the first time in this myth the singing is in Rukwangali which is mixed with Thimbukushu. It has become clear during discussion in the field that "pe rambo", translated as grave, is an abbreviation of "pa dirambo" which means a place where an animal was killed. The sense of the ritual song could be the fact that agriculture, without whatever Tjakova had to offer, was doomed to failure.

Rg or R

271 Kehe ngura-ngura pa kuyenda varume ku muka  
Thimbamba nko ku damu uta wendi wa kandja nko kuyenda ku  
rupare.

272 Thimbamba nko ku vareka kuyimba naku twenjaura vidira na  
vikorama vya vididi vyaku kushuva-shuva.

273 Mu kutwenjaura uye kuna kuviponya.

T

274 Thimbamba we, Thimbamba na uta,  
Thimbamba we, Thimbamba na uta,  
Thimbamba we, Thimbamba na uta,  
Thimbamba we, Thimbamba na uta,  
Dikwakwa tuyende, Thimbamba na uta,  
Ndirure tuyende, Thimbamba na uta,  
Nkuti tuyende, Thimbamba na uta,  
Rukoko tuyende, Thimbamba na uta,  
Thimba we, Thimbamba na uta,  
Thimba we, Thimbamba na uta,  
Thimbamba we, Thimbamba na uta,  
Thimbamba we, Thimbamba na uta.(1)

\*\*\*\*\*

271 Every morning, when the men went to clear the ground for  
planting, Thimbamba picked up his bow and arrow and went to  
the threshing floor

272 Thimbamba started singing while mentioning various birds  
and small animals.

273 As he mentioned them he shot them.

274 You Thimbamba, Thimbamba with a bow and arrow,  
You Thimbamba, Thimbamba with a bow and arrow,  
You Thimbamba, Thimbamba with a bow and arrow,  
You Thimbamba, Thimbamba with a bow and arrow,  
Dikwakwa (a familiar local bird) let us go, Thimbamba with a  
bow and arrow,  
Starling (Ndirure) let us go, Thimbamba with a bow and  
arrow,  
Dove (Nkuti) let us go, Thimbamba with a bow and arrow,  
Hornnosebird (Rukoko) let us go, Thimbamba with a bow and  
arrow.  
You Thimbamba, Thimbamba with a bow and arrow,  
You Thimba, Thimbamba with a bow and arrow,  
You Thimba, Thimbamba with a bow and arrow,  
You Thimbamba, Thimbamba with a bow and arrow.

\*\*\*\*\*

(1) This sub-scene in which Thimbamba is set to shoot birds  
and small animals who would steal the mahangu grains (an  
important local cereal) from the threshing floor (rupare),  
is seldom included in the telling of the myth, but its  
exclusion from this text drew protests from all the key  
figures with whom the proposed text was checked. The song of  
Thimbamba would be embroidered or shortened according to

Rg or R

275 Pa kumanita kuyimba Thimbamba, hawe videra na vikorama vya vididi rwaki-rwaki vina fu.

276 Thimbamba nko kudamuna atware kwa mpandjendi Mayenga-Nyambi aka tereke.

277 Mo kavi yendanga kehe ngura-ngura ntjene varume vana yendi ku muka.

278 Matiku Tjakova nko kuvhumbuka a vatauke ira linsheti okuno uye kuna kuyimba:

Tj

279 "Hindu-hindula viti vya Kalunga, hindu-hindula viti vya Kalunga, hindu-hindula viti vya Kalunga." dogoro vitondo navinshe avi yimana nka.

Rg or R

280 Kare limutitu tite ira kapi vana puturapo.

281 Ngura-ngura apa vaka yire varume kuya wana ira kapi kava yavi kankara vitondo.

282 Nko kuvareka ku kankara okuno kuna kuyimba:

\*\*\*\*\*

275 When Thimbamba completed his singing, the shot birds and small animals lay everywhere around him.

276 Thimbamba picked them up and took them to his sister Mayenga-Nyambi to be cooked.

277 This recurred every morning when the men went out to clear the ground for planting.

278 In the night Tjakova moved out of his grave and sprang around like a frog and sang:<sup>(m)</sup>

279 Let me put up, let me put up, God's trees, let me put up, let me put up, God's trees."

280 All the chopped down trees were again in their positions and there was again a forest as though they had not chopped down the trees.

281 In the morning all the men came into the forest and found the work they had done the previous day undone.

282 They started again chopping down the trees while they sang:

\*\*\*\*\*

(1) cont.

taste and the time available, and the animals included would depend upon the knowledge of the teller about the various birds and small animals of the area. If the episode was included at all then it would normally be repeated after each repetition of the ground clearing sequence.

Tj (joined ritual)

283 "Kulima-ko ngesi,kulima-ko ngesi, ----"

Rg or R

284 Ngurova varume nko kuvyuka ku mundi.

285 Matiku Tjakova nko kuvhumbuka avataghuke ira linsheti okuno uye kuna ku yimba:

286 [Tj] "Hindu-hindula viti vya Kalunga,hindu-hindula viti vya Kalunga,hindu-hindula viti vya Kalunga." [Rg or R] dogoro vitondo navinshe avi yimana nka.

Rg or R

287 Ngura-ngura varume kuya wana vitondo ira kapi kava vitete ano ava tetuka.

288 Nko kuvareka ku kankara okuno vavo kuna kuyimba:

Rg or R (joined ritual)

289 "Kulima-ko ngesi,kulima-ko ngesi, ----"

290 Ngurova varume nko kuvyuka ku mundi.

291 Matiku Tjakova nko kuvhumbuka avataghuke ira linsheti kuno uye kuna ku yimba:

\*\*\*\*\*

283 "This type of planting, this type of planting,----."

284 In the evening they went back home.

285 In the night Tjakova moved out of his grave and started to spring around like a frog while he sang:

286 "Let me put up, let me put up, God's trees,----," till all the chopped down trees were again in their previous position.

287 In the morning all the men came into the forest and found the work they had done the previous day undone.

288 They started again chopping down the trees while they sang:

289 "This type of planting, this type of planting,----."

290 In the evening all the men went back home.

291 In the night Tjakova moved out of his grave and started to spring around like a frog while he sang:

\*\*\*\*\*

(m) Tjakova sings in Tjiwiko, a language of Angola. The singing of "get up, get up God's trees" while unusual, is still a ritual expression of the relationship between man and nature. Frogs in this area, appear during the rainy season, coming out of the ground during the night and are understood to be a symbol for rain.



292 [Tj] "Hindu-hindula viti vya Kalunga,hindu-hindula viti vya Kalunga,..."[Rg or R] dogoro vitondo navinshe avi yimana nka.

Rg or R

293 Ngoweyo kavi horokanga kehe liyuva na kehe matiku.

294 Ngura-ngura imwe apa vayire varume kuya mu wana Tjakova ana vhumbuka ana shungire.

295 Nko kumutwara ku mudi ava kamu horeka.

296 Nko kuhanga morovhu na kudipagha ngombe ano lifeste ali shakara.

297 Nko ku kamu horora Tjakova.

.....  
THERE IS A VARIANT OF THE NEXT FEW VERSES.  
.....

Rutimwitililo Rwa Kuhova

Rg or R

1-298 Pa kumana kudana lifeste linya,Tjakova nko kuteta rughu na liwe lya utwe,nko kurutaura ano aru kara limuwato.

1-299 Tjakova na Mayenga-Nyambi na vakwami va Tjakova na Mbawawa nko kuronda mu wato varute mukuro.

\*\*\*\*\*

292 "Let me put up, let me put up, God's trees,----", till all the trees were again in their previous position.

293 It was happening like this during the day and during the night for a long time.

294 One morning when all the men came into the forest, they found Tjakova sitting.

295 They took him home secretly and hid him away.

296 They made beer and slaughtered cattle and had a big celebration.

297 They brought Tjakova out of hiding.

.....  
THERE IS A VARIANT OF THE NEXT FEW VERSES.  
.....

1-298 After that celebration Tjakova cut with a sharp stone a bamboo and turned it into a big boat.

1-299 Tjakova, Mayenga-Nyambi and Tjakova's followers including the jackal got into the big boat to cross the river.

1-300 Tjakova nko kupiruka ano ashivi.

1-301 Mema agha vareke kudunda ano kakurukadi oghu gha hupiro penshendi mu lirunda,nko kuvareka kuyimba:

Tj and K (ritual)

1-302 "Kuthima-kuthima-uno mwaka-wa kuthima,othi ngombe thaya,vanu voshe vaya."

Rg or R

1-303 Mema nko kumu minita kakurukadi afu.

.....  
THE THIRD VERSION DIFFERS FROM THE ABOVE AS FOLLOWS:  
.....

Rutimwitililo Rwa Utatu

Rg or R

3-298 Pa kumana kudana lifeste linya,Tjakova nko kuteta rughu na liwe lya utwe,nko kurutaura ano aru kara limuwato.

3-299 Tjakova nko kuronda penshendi mu limuwato arute limu kuro.

\*\*\*\*\*

1-300 Tjakova turned back and whistled.(n)

1-301 The water (of the river) started to rise while the old woman who was left alone at the deserted kraal began to sing:(o)

1-302 "Extinction, extinction, this is the year of extinction, the cattle have gone, all people have gone."

1-303 The water of the river washed the old woman away and she died.

.....  
THE THIRD VERSION DIFFERS FROM THE ABOVE AS FOLLOWS:  
.....

3-298 When they completed the celebration, Tjakova cut a bamboo with a sharp stone, opened it and it turned into a big boat.

3-299 Tjakova alone got into the boat to cross the big river.

\*\*\*\*\*

(n) Whistling here by a leader also expresses ritual relation to nature, specifically to wind and water but in the sense of cursing. Parents may still say to a stubborn or strangely acting child "have you been whistled by somebody".  
(o) The old woman appears again and sings in Thimbukushu referring to the wiping out of everything on her side of the river.

3-300 Mu kuruta linya limukuro Tjakova akete makongoro gha mayingi agha gha shanino kuroveka wato wendi.

3-301 Apa ghaka tikire Tjakova mu shirongo sha vangonga,ngonga nko kughamba:

3-302 "Damuna vasho utware ku shirongo shenu morwashi muno mu shirongo shetu kwato wa ku kuketa ve."

3-303 Tjakova nko ku vyuta vashe ku shirongo shavo.

### PART III

Rg or R

304 Paku katika musheli munya ya mukuro,Tjakova,Mayenga-Nyambi na vakwami va Tjakova nko kuvareka kuyenda vatambe utokeyuva.

305 Mu kuyenda Tjakova uye kuna kuyimba:

306 [Tj] "Mwayile tata,[T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,Manongo muyero,mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,athiya tata,mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,kurepe kumane,mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,nko nika kundame,mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo."

\*\*\*\*\*

3-300 He encountered many problems with great water monsters which tried to prevent him crossing the river but he defeated each of them.(P)

3-301 When he came into the land of the eagle the eagle said:

3-302 "Take your father back to your country because in our country there is nobody who can defeat you."

3-303 Tjakova took his father back to their country.

### PART III

304 When they reached the other side of the river, Tjakova, Mayenga-Nyambi and the followers of Tjakova started the journey westward.

305 As they were walking Tjakova sang:

306 "Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there, Manongo is stupid, eagle lead me there, he left my father, eagle lead me there, however far it might be, eagle take me there, I will come there, eagle take me there."

\*\*\*\*\*

(p) Water Monster,likongoro,is believed in this culture to be very powerful;to be able,for example,to cause flooding.

Rg or R

307 Vakengeko limukiti kuna kutundilira ku uto wavo.

308 Apa lyaya tikire likiti nko kughamba:

309 "Mutekurwande nyamba-nyambeko?"

310 Tjakova nko kulimburura okuno uye kuna kuyimba:

Ru (ritual)

311 "Yi'nke niku zamba-zamba po unona wange,nainye wamana kumina,po unona wange,gusa vapika omine,po unona wange."

Rg or R

312 Likiti nko kuvareka kuyimba:

T

313 "Tshwi-tshwi,murarero,tshwi-tshwi,murarero,tara ndovhu namina,murarero,tara maghowa namina,muravero,pa upu wa vapika!" [ONOMATOPOEIA] ngwambarakata.

Rg or R

314 Likiti nko kuduka liyende ku upumeyuva,ano ali ka kondera ya mutitu likatundilire ku uto.

\*\*\*\*\*

307 They saw a monster coming toward them.(q)

308 When it reached them the monster said:(r)

309 "My little son what can you sacrifice to me?"

310 Tjakova answered in song:

311 "What can I sacrifice to you, I am a little child, you have swallowed everything, I am a little child, take my servants to swallow, I am a little child."

312 The monster started singing:

313 "Chwee-chwee, supper!! chwee-chwee, supper!! To me who have even swallowed elephants, supper!! to me who has even swallowed big dry trees, supper!! what are these servants!! Ngwambarakata.(s)

314 The monster ran to the east but turned into the forest and came ahead of them again.

\*\*\*\*\*

(q)"Likiti" is generally accepted as an ogre, goblin or giant, etc. but in this myth the translation "monster", is preferred for several reasons which will appear later.

(r) The monster which is moving eastward speaks Thimbukushu the language of the Hambukushu the people occupying the eastern most part of the Kavango region (here and there it is mixed with Rugciriku or Rusambyu).Tjakova who is moving westward sings in Rukwangali,a language of the Vakwangali and Vambunza,the two Kavango tribes occupying the western part of the Kavango region.

315 Tjakova na Mayenga-Nyambi nko kuyenda okuno Tjakova kuna kuyimba:

316 [Tj] "Mwayile tata, [T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,----"

Rg or R

317 Vakengeko limukiti kuna kutundilira ku uto wavo.

318 Apa lyaya tikire likiti nko kughamba:

319 "Mutekurwande nyamba-nyambeko?"

320 Tjakova nko kulimburura okuno uye kuna kuyimba:

321 "Yi'nke niku zamba-zamba po unona wange,nainye wamana kumina,po unona wange,gusa mukadange omine,po unona wange."

Rg or R

322 Likiti nko kuvareka kuyimba:

T

323 "Tshwi-tshwi,murarero,tshwi-tshwi,murarero,tara ndovhu namina,murarero,tara maghowa namina,murarero,pa upu wa Mayenga!" [ONOMATOPOEIA] ngwambarakata.

Rg or R

324 Likiti kuduka tupu kanema ghona liyende ku upumeyuva,kare lina ka kondera mu mutitu likatundilire ku uto.

\*\*\*\*\*

315 Tjakova and Mayenga-Nyambi walked while Tjakova sang:

316 "Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there,----"

317 They saw the monster coming toward them.

318 When it reached them the monster said:

319 "My little son, what can you sacrifice to me?"

320 Tjakova answered in song:

321 "What can I sacrifice to you, I am a little child, you have swallowed everything, I am a little child, take my wife to swallow, I am a little child."

322 The monster started singing:

323 "Chwee-chwee, supper!! to me who have even swallowed elephants, supper!! to me who have even swallowed big dry trees, supper!! what is this Mayenga!! Ngwambarakata.

324 The monster ran for a distance eastward but turned into the forest and came ahead (of Tjakova).

\*\*\*\*\*

(s) "Tshwi-tshwi" is the sound in the breast of the monster before it utters a real sound, as in the breast of a lion before it roars.

Ru (ritual)

325 Tjakova mu kuyenda uye kuna kuyimba:

326 [Tj] "Mwayile tata, [T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo, Manongo muyero, mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo, athigha tata, mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo, kurepe kumane, mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo, nko nika kundame, mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo."

Rg or R

327 Akengeko Tjakova limukiti kuna ku tundilira ku uto.

328 Apa lyaya tikire ali ghamba:

329 "Mutekurwande nyamba-nyambeko?"

330 Tjakova nko kulimburura okuno uye kuna kuyimba:

Ru (ritual)

331 "Yi'nke niku zamba-zamba po unona wange, nainye wamana kumina, po unona wange, gusa uta wange omine, po unona wange."

Rg or R

332 Likiti nko kuyimba:

T

333 "Tshwi-tshwi, murarero, tshwi-tshwi, murarero, tara ndovhu namina, murarero, tara maghowa namina, murarero, pa upu wa uta!" [ONOMATOPOEIA] ngwambarakata.

Rg or R

334 Likiti kudweghura tupu kanema ghona kare lina ka kondera ya matitu lika tundilire ku uto.

335 Mu kuyenda Tjakova kuna kuyimba:

\*\*\*\*\*

325 While walking Tjakova sang:

326 "Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there,----"

327 He saw the monster coming toward him.

328 When it reached him, the monster said:

329 "My little son, what can you sacrifice to me?"

330 Tjakova answered in song:

331 "What can I sacrifice to you, I am a little child,----, take my bow and arrow to swallow, I am a little child."

332 The monster started to sing:

333 "Chwee-chwee, supper!!

----, what are a bow and arrow!" Ngwambarakata.

334 The monster ran for a distance eastward and turned into the forest and came ahead (of Tjakova).

335 While walking Tjakova sang:

336 [Tj] "Mwayile tata,[T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,Manongo muyero,mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,athiya tata,mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,kurepe kumane,mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo,nko nika kundame,mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo."

Rg or R

337 Akengeko Tjakova limukiti kuna ku tundilira ku uto.

338 Apa lyaya tikire alighamba:

339 "Mutekurwande nyamba-nyambeko?"

340 Tjakova nko kulimburura mu kuyimba:

Ru (ritual)

341 "Yi'nke niku zamba-zamba po unona wange,nainye wamana kumina,po unona wange,gusa umwange omine,po unona wange."

Rg or R

342 Likiti nko ku yimba:

T

343 "Tshwi-tshwi,murarero,tara ndovhu namina,murarero,tara maghowa namina,murarero,pa upu wa Tjakova!" [ONOMATOPOEIA] ngwambarakata.

Rg or R

344 Likiti kudweghura dogoro opo varutilire va Tjakova,ano Tjakova kushwanga na uta wa nkandja mu shirakuha sha likiti ano ali muruku mo.

345 Likiti kudweghura tupu kanema ghona makura ku kondera ya mutitu likatundilire ku uto.

346 Muku yenda Tjakova uye kuna kuyimba:

\*\*\*\*\*

336 "Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there,----"

337 Tjakova saw the monster coming toward of him.

338 When it reached him, the beast said:

339 "My little son, what can you sacrifice to me?"

340 Tjakova answered in song:

341 "What can I sacrifice to you, I am a little child,----, take me to swallow, I am a little child."

342 The monster sang:

343 "Chwee-chwee, supper!!  
----, what is this Tjakova!"

344 The monster ran eastward but when it reached the place where Tjakova and his followers crossed the river, Tjakova pushed his bow into the back of the beast's tongue with the result that it vomitted him out.

345 The monster ran for a distance eastward but turned into the forest to come ahead (of Tjakova).

346 While walking Tjakova sang:

347 [Tj] "Mwayile tata,[T] mbambanyunyi ya untwaremo, ----"

Rg or R

348 Akengeko Tjakova limukiti kuna ku tundilira ku uto.

349 Apa lyaya tikire alighamba:

350 "Mutekurwande nyamba-nyambeko?"

351 Tjakova nko kulimburura mu ku yimba:

Ru (ritual)

352 "Yi'nke niku zamba-zamba po unona wange,nainye wamana kumina,po unona wange,gusa umwange omina,po unona wange."

Rg or R

353 Likiti nko kuyimba:

T

354 "Tshwi-tshwi,murarero,tara ndovhu namina,murarero,tara maghowa namina,murarero,pa upu wa Tjakova!" [ONOMATOPOEIA] ngwambarakata.

Rg or R

355 Ngoweyo vya yendire lya mumina lya muruka dogoro Tjakova awana po lighano lya peke.

356 Mu lira lya likiti Tjakova nko ku tantera vantu va pongaike makara ano ava dukuta.

\*\*\*\*\*

347 "Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there,----"

348 Tjakova saw the monster coming toward him.

349 When it reached him, the monster said:

350 "My little son, what can you sacrifice to me?"

351 Tjakova answered in song:

352 "What can I sacrifice to you, I am a little child, ----, take me to swallow, I am a little child."

353 The monster sang:

354 "Chwee-chwee, supper!! ----, what is this Tjakova?" Ngwambarakata.

355 It continued this way; the monster swallowed him and it vomitted him out till Tjakova thought of another plan.

356 In the stomach of the monster Tjakova ordered all males to gather charcoal and made fires with bellows.<sup>(t)</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

(t) Bellows,"Dimuduyi",are carved from a single piece of wood in the form of two wooden pipes having separate air chambers at the back end.The air chambers are separately covered with a soft skin to which a short stick is bound for pumping the air through the pipes which lead to a



357 Muti aghu ku hanene mulira lya likiti ano linota lya linene ali vareke.

358 Likiti nko kuvareka kuduka lipapare mema okuno lyalyo kuna kuyimba:

359 "Oko nika ghanwa,ku undongo-ndongo,oko nika ghanwa,ku undongo-ndongo,mushima toko,mushima kaurungwina!"

360 Nko kuya tika pa lidiva lyopa mema.

361 Likiti nko kuvatukera mu mema,ano lidiva kare lina pwilire.

362 Likiti nko kuvareka kuduka okuno lyalyo kuna kuyimba:

363 "Oko nika ghanwa,ku undongo-ndongo,oko nika ghanwa,ku undongo-ndongo,mushima toko,mushima kaurungwina!"

364 Kuya wana limudiva lyaperu mema.

\*\*\*\*\*

357 Thick columns of smoke spread in the stomach of the monster and it started to feel thirsty.<sup>(u)</sup>

358 The monster started running to look for water while it sang:

359 "Where shall I drink water, at a far place, where shall I drink water, at a far place, my heart is hot, my heart is burning!"

360 It reached a big pool of water.

361 The monster sprang into the water but the pool dried up immediately.

362 The monster started again to run while it sang:

363 "Where shall I drink water, at a far place, where shall I drink water, at a far place, my heart is hot, my heart is burning."

364 It reached a big pool of water.

\*\*\*\*\*

(t) cont.

common opening at the front.The end of the air pipes is connected to or fitted into a clay nozzle which extends into the fire.

(u) A mixture of motifs and images.Huge columns of smoke could be caused in the process of burning wood or making charcoal but not when making fire with charcoal and bellows. It would seem certain that some important parts in the processes reflected have been omitted at this point or forgotten by the narrators in the course of the years.

365 Likiti nko kuvatukera mo mu mema,ano liditya kare lina  
pwilire.

366 Likiti nko kuvareka nka kuduka okuno kuna kuyimba:

367 "Oko nika ghanwa,ku undongo-ndongo,oko nika ghanwa,ku  
undongo-ndongo,mushima toko,mushima kaurungwina!"

368 Nko kuya wana limudiva lyaperu mema,ano likiti nko ku  
vatukera mo mu mema.

.....  
There is an extant version of the myth which differs from  
the definitive version as we have presented it only in its  
ending, that is, from verse 369 onwards. We will refer to  
this when we come to it as version 4.  
.....

1-369 Liditya hawekare lina pwilire.

1-370 Ngoweyo mo vya yindire dogoro likiti alifu ku linota.

1-371 Tjakova arupukamo aka papare wa kulitughura.

1-372 Nko kuya wana kakorongongo.

1-373 Tjakova nko kughamba:

\*\*\*\*\*

365 The monster sprang into the water but the pool dried up.

366 The monster started to run while it sang:

367 "Where shall I drink water, at a far place, where shall  
I drink water, at a far place, my heart is hot, my heart is  
burning."

368 It reached a pool of water and the monster spring into  
the water.

1-369 The pool dried up immediately.

1-370 It happened repeatedly in that way till the monster  
died of thirst.

1-371 Tjakova came out to look for somebody who could open  
the dead monster.

1-372 He came to tapping-beetle.(v)

1-373 Tjakova said:

\*\*\*\*\*

(v) The rain-beetle,kakorongongo,who also appears in the  
rainy season,sings in Thimbukushu. Traditional ways of  
diagnosing,prophesying and answering problems now appear.

1-374 "Kakorongongo ndjanekedeko."

1-375 Kakorongongo nko kuvareka kuyanekeda okuno kuna kuyimba:

1-376 [T]"Shimbumburu keyanga,shimbumburu keyanga,shina [Tj] mutomba [T] keyanga,shina munyeno keyanga."

Rg or R

1-377 Kakorongongo nko kughamba:

1-378 "Yenda kwa mbati ndje aka ku tantero."

1-379 Tjakova pa kuyatika kwa mbati,mbati naye nko kuvareka kuyanekeda okuno uye kuna kuyimba:

1-380 [T] "Shimbumburu keyanga,shimbumburu keyanga,shina [Tj] mutomba [T] keyanga,shina munyeno keyanga."

Rg or R

1-381 Mbatl nko kughamba:

1-382 "Yenda kwa katjetje."

1-383 Apa ghaya tikire Tjakova kwa katjetje,katjetje aghamba:

\*\*\*\*\*

1-374 "Tapping-beetle use your oracle to find out how I should solve my problem."

1-375 Tapping-beetle took an oracle and sang:

1-376 "The insect, the insect diagnoses with its anus, it diagnoses with its anus."

1-377 Tapping-beetle said:

1-378 "Go to water-tortoise he will be able to tell you about the solution to your problem."

1-379 When Tjakova came to the water-tortoise, water-tortoise also took its oracle and diagnosed while it sang: (w)

1-380 "The insect, the insect, it diagnoses with its anus, it diagnoses with its anus."

1-381 The water-tortoise said:

1-382 "Go to katjetje."

1-383 When Tjakova came to katjetje, katjetje said: (x)

\*\*\*\*\*

(w) Water-tortoise (turtle) which usually appears during the rainy season sings in Thimbukushu.

(x) "Katjetje" or "Runduru-nyunyi" is a small river bird with the long sharp beak of a fisher which leaves a long

1-384 "Naviyiva ashi nke una yere,toko nika kenge wene udito ghoye."

1-385 Apa vaya tikire pa likiti lya kufa,katjetje angenene ku kanwa kuka rupukera ku matakoko.

1-386 Katjetje nko kughamba:

1-387 "Vininke navinshe munda viwalika,ame kuvhura kutaure likiti nshene ngaumpa nshako da vilya."

1-388 Tjakova atwenyedere katjetje nshako do vilya.

1-389 Katjetje nko kuvareka kuteta mpu daku kushuva-shuva kutundiliranga ku matakoko dogoro ku mutwe okuno kuna kuyimba:

T

1-390 "Tara runduru-nyunyi ame me katjetje,tara runduru-nyunyi,ame me katjetje."

Rg or R

1-391 Katjetje nko kutantera Tjakova:

\*\*\*\*\*

1-384 "I know what brought you to me, let us go so that I may see what problem you have."

1-385 When they came to the dead monster, katjetje penetrated into the mouth (of the dead monster ) and came out at the back.

1-386 Katjetje said:

1-387 "Everything inside is still in good condition, I will open your monster provided that afterwards you give me bags of grains."

1-388 Tjakova promised katjetje bags of grains.

1-389 Katjetje started to cut (with his sharp mouth) the different layers of skins starting every time from the back to the mouth while he sang:(y)

1-390 "Look at me a small bird, I am katjetje, look at me a small bird, I am katjetje."

1-391 Katjetje told Tjakova:(z)

\*\*\*\*\*

(x) cont.

silver streak across the surface of the water. The name "Katjetje" represents the sound it makes. It is also called "kavhura-makiti" meaning "ogre, goblin, giant or monster opener". In these verses it speaks Rusambyu or Rugciriku.

(y) Katjetje sings the ritual song in Thimbukushu.

(z) Katjetje here speaks the language of the Vimbundu,one of the tribes in Angola.

K (ritual)

1-392 "Telekela museka ndjikutuware ndjamba yove."

Rg or R

1-393 Pa kumana kulya muhora, katjetje kuvareka nka kuteta mpu daku kushuva-shuva okuno kuna kuyimba:

T

1-394 "Tara runduru-nyunyi, ame me katjetje, tara runduru-nyunyi, ame me katjetje."

Rg or R

1-395 Katjetje nko kutantera Tjakova:

K (ritual)

1-396 "Telekela museka ndjikutuware ndjamba yove."

Rg or R

1-397 Pa kumana kulya muhora, katjetje kuvareka nka kuteta mpu daku kushuva-shuva okuno kuna kuyimba:"

T

1-398 "Tara runduru-nyunyi, ame me katjetje, tara runduru-nyunyi, ame me katjetje."

Rg or R

1-399 Hawe Tjakova naye nko kuvareka kuyuvha ngombe omu dina ku kumba mu lira lya likiti.

1-400 Katjetje nko kutantera Tjakova:

K (ritual)

1-401 "Telekela museka ndjikutuware ndjamba yove."

\*\*\*\*\*

1-392 "Cook for me some grains so that I may open your elephant."

1-393 When katjetje finished eating the cooked grains, he started cutting the different layers of skin while he sang:

1-394 "Look at me a small bird, I am katjetje, look at me a small bird, I am katjetje."

1-395 Katjetje told Tjakova:

1-396 "Cook for me some grains so that I may open your elephant."

1-397 When katjetje finished eating the cooked grains he started cutting the different layers of skin while he sang:

1-398 "Look at me a small bird, I am katjetje, look at me a small bird, I am katjetje."

1-399 Even Tjakova could hear the sounds of the cattle in the stomach of the dead monster.

1-400 Katjetje told Tjakova:

1-401 "Cook for me some grains so that I may open your monster."

Rg or R

1-402 Pa kumana kulya muhora, katjetje kuvareka nka kuteta mpu daku kushuva-shuva okuno uye kuna kuyimba:

T

1-403 "Tara runduru-nyunyi, ame me katjetje, tara runduru-nyunyi, ame me katjetje."

Rg or R

1-404 Katjetje nko kutantera Tjakova:

K (ritual)

1-405 "Telekela museka ndjikutuware ndjamba yove.

Rg or R

1-406 Pa kumana kulya muhora, katjetje kuvareka nka kuteta mpu daku kushuva-shuva okuno uye kuna kuyimba:

T

1-407 "Tara runduru-nyunyi, ame me katjetje, tara runduru-nyunyi, ame me katjetje."

Rg or R

1-408 Valiharuke limukiti lina tauka "pwa", hawe vantu weye-weye, vikorama kuna ku kuhana, vidira kuna ku kuhana, vimbumburu kuna ku kuhana.

1-409 Katjetje nko kumupa nshako da vilya aka vyuka ku mudi wendi.

\*\*\*\*\*

1-402 When Katjetje finished eating the cooked grains, he started cutting the different layers of skin while he sang:

1-403 Look at me a small bird, I am katjetje, look at me a small bird, I am katjetje."

1-404 Katjetje told Tjakova:

1-405 "Cook for me some grains so that I may open your elephant."

1-406 When katjetje finished eating the cooked grains, he started cutting the different layers of skin while he sang:

1-407 "Look at me a small bird, I am katjetje, look at me a small bird, I am katjetje."

1-408 They saw the monster's (stomach) burst "pwa!", then people started to make noises, animals started to spread, birds started to spread, insects started to spread.

1-409 They gave katjetje the promised bags of grain to take back to his home.

.....  
Version 4 (a)  
.....

Rutimwitilito Rwa Une

R

4-369 Lidiva hawe kare lina pwilire.

4-370 Ngoweyo mo vya yendire tunda mukunda yenda mukunda.

4-371 Tjakova uye kuna ku kengera ashi mukunda uni ngo wa uwa.

4-372 Apa lyaya tikire likiti mu mukunda wa uwa.

4-373 Tjakova nko kutantera vantu vadukute ngudu-ngudu.

4-374 Likiti nko kufa ku linota.

4-375 Pa ku kumanita kushetera hawe ku matako nako aku gharuka.

4-376 Tjakova nko ku rupukamo.

\*\*\*\*\*

.....  
Version 4 (a)  
.....

4-369 The pool dried up immediately.

4-370 This happened repeatedly while the monster moved from one region to another.

4-371 Tjakova was looking for the most suitable region.

4-372 At last the monster came into a suitable region.

4-373 Tjakova ordered his people to blow the bellows violently.

4-374 The monster died of thirst.

4-375 As the monster blew its last breath its back opened for a moment.

4-376 Tjakova escaped from the stomach.

\*\*\*\*\*

a) This version is known only to a few older people in the western part of the Shambyu area. There is no evidence that it ever had a wider distribution. It seems to be a corruption of the original, generated by the desire for the usual closed endedness of African myth. Here Tjakova does not disappear but his original quest seems to be absorbed into what he in fact achieves. We have included it because it highlights the unusual nature of the definitive ending.

4-377 Tjakova nko ku vareka kutughura likiti.

4-378 Apa gha manine kuli tughura lyene likiti hawe vantu weye-weye, vikorama kuna ku kuhana, vidira kuna ku kuhana, vimbumburu kuna ku kuhana.

4-379 Tjakova nko kumu tumba akare hompa.

\*\*\*\*\*

4-377 Tjakova started to open up the monster.

4-378 When he finished opening up the monster, then people started to make noises, animals started to make noises, animals started to spread, birds started to spread, insects started to spread.

4-379 Tjakova was then made king.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### NOTES

Version 4 was told on the 10th October 1989 by Rebeka Kambundu of the royal family of the chiefs of the Vashambyu. She was born around 1930 at Uruyi in western Zambia and came to the Kavango at the age of 3 or 4 years.

Susan Runguro was born 23rd Feb. 1934 at Yaro, north of the Kavango river in the Gciriku region (Angola). She is well known for her knowledge not only of the Tjakova myth but of many others. The author heard Susan Runguro telling the myth of Tjakova when he was a boy. She told it on the 20th October 1989 exactly as the author remembers her telling it so many years ago. Comparing the version of Rebeka Kambundu (version 4) with that of Susan Runguro (version 1) and asking many people which version they knew, it became clear that version 1 is the only version extant in eastern Shambyu, while knowledge of version 4 is localized in the western area of Shambyu.

It is version 1 that is known in the Mbukushu and Gciriku regions also.

Myth in the western area is very inter-mixed. Vashambyu living in the western area now speak Rukwangali for the most part, instead of Rushambyu, and consequently the legends and myths of the area reveal a mixing of Vakwangali, Hawiko, Vagciriku and Hambukushu sources. The Diranene myth which is Vakwangali and Vambunza, is also known in this part of the Shambyu region. The Siyengo myth within this part of the Shambyu region is the same as the Sambilikita myth of the Vakwangali and Vambunza. This mixing is the result of Rundu, the principal town in the western area, being the administrative centre of the Kavango and having many Vakwangali and Vambunza living there.

<sup>1</sup> Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger, (London, Routledge and Megan Paul, 1969) p.169f.



## CHAPTER 6

### FIRST LEVEL ANALYSIS OF THE TJAKOVA MYTH

In the notes to the text we have tried to enable the reader to understand the language of the story with its immediate references. That is, we have tried to remedy the inevitable defects of translation.

In the first level analysis we are concerned to capture and convey the meaning that the story has as myth for those whose heritage it is. What does it say to them beyond the literal meaning of the language, what effect does it have upon them, as they themselves have testified during the field studies. This cannot be cleanly separated from what is contained in the text notes where one is dealing with a people whose every-day mode of discourse is in any case, highly metaphorical and, of course, at this level differences of opinion appear, but the intention now is to place the reader as far as possible in the position of the adherent.

The story of the myth falls into three natural sections,

distinguished by the context and nature of the action going on within it. Each of these sections can be further broken down into sub-sections as the nature of the events change or into individual cycles within the groups of cycles that occur in each section. In addition there are throughout the myth as a whole, what might be termed vital turning points, events that occur late in each section indicating that a major change is about to take place.

The myth as a whole reflects changes in the economy of the group as it attempts to move from gathering to agriculture.

### Part I

The first main section comprises verses 1 to 189. This section represents the old world with, among other things, a gathering lifestyle. It reflects also the older traditions. It also seems to suggest why the gathering culture was doomed to failure.

Here we meet the first group of cycles and it consists in an account of a quest for food as Manongo and his un-named father go out daily to look for the eggs of an eagle. This continues until the death of Manongo's father or until Manongo's father is taken away by the eagle to the "unknown land", according to the version being told. Until this transitional event all other events repeat without changes of major significance. The hearer is warned of change to

come when the eagle places the pangolin in his nest.

The departure of Manongo's father leads to the birth of Manongo's brother, Tjakova, who takes over the principal role in the myth and whose determination to find his father sets the scene for part II.

## Part II

The second part of the myth comprises verses 190 to 303. The group of cycles that begin this section reflects the break from a culture dependent upon gathering but reduced to scavenging, through stages representing hunting and a highly rated mode of gathering, to the attempt to practice agriculture.

The death of Tjakova at the hands of the old woman who would resist change warns of a shift in the direction of the story. The major change is heralded by Tjakova's return to life.

## Part III

The third section comprises verses 304 to 409. It continues the story of Tjakova's journey but now in a westward direction. The group of cycles into which the story soon moves, concern Tjakova's struggle with the monster and end with its death.

The end of part II reflects the finding and the smelting of iron. The cycle with the monster in this section seems to reflect a struggle with the earth and probably experience with the iron tipped plough.

At the end of this section and therefore of the myth as a whole, we find the dead beast being opened up fruitfully by Katjetje, the small fisher bird, while Tjakova disappears into the background. Thus the myth finishes open-ended. There is no solution to Tjakova's quest, that is, his determination to find his father, that gives impetus to the whole story : "How ever far it may be, eagle take me there, I will come there, eagle take me there."

It is, of course, the structure and quality of the myth as a whole that reflects how life is experienced not the last scene. Life is still in the cycles of progress and reversal, Tjakova is still struggling with the earth but there is a telos to which it moves, the father, the land of the eagle, a fruitful earth.

## PART I

While part I. clearly represents the original situation of the group, the majority of older contemporary members interviewed see in it elements of agricultural significance. To them it is a re-telling of earlier experiences of the group that are still in the memories of the older members.

They do not look at the myth in its logical sequences. They do differentiate the three main parts of the myth but emphasize its unity by affirming that the second part is but a continuation of the first in an advanced style of living, and that the third part is a continuation of the second. Both second and third parts reflect progress.

According to members of this group, the pregnant woman who needed special food, a strange insemination and delivery, the mother of Tjakova, because she could be understood as one bringing regeneration to the world, could be seen as the fertile earth which needs seeds or grains which were presumably unavailable in that region. Males would then travel long distances to obtain the needed seeds. On their way home these seeds could be used as provisions. Thus the males brought too little home for planting and for provision at home. The journey would then need to be repeated every year.

On the other hand, when asked about the origin of the myth, this group agreed that the Tjakova story could be a mixture of various separate stories and that therefore different people could find different references in the myth.

The group still remember the "Ndengureni", the severe drought which took place between 1941 and 1943. This forced the males to travel long distances to exchange their regional products such as iron, to get maize and other grains. Many still remember their long and dangerous

journeys deep into Angola to an area called "Muwawa". On their return they did indeed use the maize and other grain obtained as provision. This could not be the first severe drought that this group of people had experienced. When drought came they turned back to gathering, even scavenging.

The traditional way of gathering was described by the older members interviewed as follows:

The males went daily with their elder sons into the forest. On their way they would pick up every edible thing that they came across. When finding a tree bearing ripe fruit, the father usually climbed into the tree and filled the baskets with the fruit and let them down to the son. After that the father might chop off a few branches so that the son could pick and eat the ripe fruit while he stripped and consumed the fruit remaining on the tree. This would happen daily in the long seasons of severe drought.

An individual member of this people who had achieved prominence had another view about the myth. He viewed the myth in biblical terms. The simple birth and life of Tjakova reflected for him the birth and life of Jesus Christ. The death of Tjakova reflects the death of Jesus. Tjakova saved the world which was locked in the dark stomach of the beast and this reflects Christ who saved mankind.

This interpretation can, of course, be related to the experience of the interpreter. He was the first of the Kavango people to become a Roman Catholic priest. After

serving his own people for many years he went to Rome where he obtained his doctorate in customary laws.

He spent many years training for the priesthood in Lesotho, where it seems that he might have been introduced to the example that Werner writes about. "It may be worth noting that a Christian writer of Basotholand has made use of the Swallower legend as a dim foreshadowing of the promise of a Redeemer." (1932) 2

Clearly people see in the myth what they see in it, and this will be as various as the experiences they have had. Our concern, however, is with those whose myth it was in relatively undisturbed context. Further, our concern is not simply with the individual references that the bits and pieces of the story may have had for them but more with what made the myth authoritative for them, that is, the manner in which the story as a whole reflected their sense of reality.

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vv.1 - 4

The traditional manner of expression in verses 1. to 4. warn the hearers that the story to follow is not merely some story for information or entertainment but is, what in the west would be called, myth. It is a story that will relate them to reality or rehearse and refresh that relationship. The story itself begins at verse 5.

vv.5 - 163

These verses contain the first of the three major and two minor cycles in the myth. The major cycles are repeated

short accounts of an event that differs only as to some detail in each telling. The minor cycles simply repeat. Among other things, the cycles allow the teller, by exclusion or inclusion, to shorten or extend the story as circumstances dictate.

This cycle serves to set the background of the story in a gathering culture and to introduce the brother as well as the unnamed father and mother of the central character.

The hearer is warned of dramatic change to come by the appearance of the Hare in v.123 and by the introduction of the Pangolin in v.129. It is only with the pangolin that we are told that it is the eagle who places the animals in the nest. Both animals are strongly charged with symbolic associations.

The section unfolds itself with the characteristics of myth typical of these people, that is to say, the man and his wife have no name, even Manongo would not be used as the name of a real person. Equally, the region in which the events are supposed to have occurred remains unspecified. In short, while the myth clearly has some references to events in the historical experience of these people, the setting of the story as a whole is ahistorical.

The improbable scene is set in v.3. by the need for the specific food for the pregnant woman. Her desire for eagle eggs poses the problem that sends her husband and Manongo out every day to look for them. Why it had to be eagle's



eggs will become clear. Great curiosity and expectation arise in the hearer with this demand. Every listener awaits in tension to see what the results of such a demand could be. The whole story is the result of that demand and the narrator reports to the audience each consequence for the life of the community in mythical sequence.

The eagle in question is a high flying bird who puts its nest at the very top of the largest trees where it can hardly be seen from the ground. Anyone who could obtain eggs from such a nest would be considered not only a very special person but also a very lucky one. The trees are such that climbing them calls for much strenuous effort and for the taking of great risks.

These eagles circle in the thermal currents and, seemingly without effort, climb to great heights and are therefore connected in the common mind to both great wisdom and intelligence and to great power. All these factors but particularly the wisdom, relates the eagle to the divine. From the start, therefore, there is something more than supreme natural difficulty associated with the demand for eagles eggs.

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v.5 - 8

These verses reflect some typical facets of the culture of the time. Manongo appears on the scene as a passive boy because the culture of the time molded him to be such. A leader must always initiate action and in particular must always perform the ritual actions, including any song or

spoken parts. Those who are led, particularly children, must participate passively.

Ritual, in the monistic world-view that is firmly in place at the beginning of the story and remains present throughout, was, of course, of cardinal importance to maintain or restore the harmonious relationship of and with the natural order. The sense of unity between the people and nature is central in understanding the ritual scenes of the myth.

#### v.7

Ritual song begins as soon as Manongo and his father set out looking for the eagle's eggs. These songs of the father, which we meet for the first time in this verse, are sung in the first person and exclude Manongo as though he were not present. The reference is only to "my sandals" although Manongo would also have sandals on. This is typical and reflects a world-view in which the participants are already an integral part of nature and while the leader represents those he leads he does so for each individual who must maintain his or her relationship when it becomes threatened by activity. He does not represent the group as a separated entity.

#### v.8

The singing of Manongo's father imitates the sound that his sandals make on the hard ground. It must be understood to mean that he belongs to the sandals and the sandals to him as they relate him to the ground that he moves across, which

itself belongs to the rest of nature. As he relates to his sandals and to the ground, he is moving gently over them so that they in turn may treat him gently and with care, as an integral part belonging to them. They are related to each other and none of them should have the intention of harming the others. This sense underlies the ritual songs as we continue through the myth.

v.9

This illustrates what was said about the location of eagles' nests.

v.12

This is the second ritual song which speaks for itself. After singing it he does indeed manage to get to the nest.

vv.15 - 16

While he was filling and handing down the baskets Manongo's father was still in harmony with nature in this gathering culture. By gobbling up all the eggs that were left in the nest without thinking of the eagle or the morrow he disturbs the harmony. This stripping of the source in the one day, was typical of this culture and seems to be offered here as the characteristic that doomed it to failure. It is not while he fills the baskets that whatever creature is in the nest at the time attacks him, in this case the water crab, but when he begins to gobble the remaining eggs.

The crab has no particular symbolic meaning for this people, it is not even a source of food as are the next two animals mentioned. Perhaps it is the connection with water that is

important. In all there will be three water creatures and three dry land animals employed by the eagle. That, together with the Iguana, that would gobble up any eggs it found, being placed to guard the eagles eggs, seems to suggest the unity or interdependence of things in this world-view.

v.17 - 18

Manongo's father resorts to a form of ritual singing to persuade the crab to let go. It does not succeed.

vv.19 - 21

That Manongo will only advise his still suffering father when he has received and eaten his fill of the eggs seems to suggest that exchange was also a part of the survival technique in the gathering culture.

vv.22 - 23

The advice given on each occasion does not seem very significant nor would one expect the father to seek advice from a son named Manongo but each time the strange barter has restored a relation between father and son the father is able to make the creature let go. The father is then able to climb down in safety singing the ritual song.

vv.28 - 36 and parallels in other repetitions of the cycle.

It might be asked why Manongo's mother did not boil the eggs herself. In the times reflected here the tradition demanded that many things brought home by the gatherers could only be cooked by the leader of the group, at a special place in the kraal and only at night with no women or children present.

The food would then be distributed in the morning by the leader of the group or clan. Whether such a rule applied to such rare and symbolic entities as eagles eggs we do not know but it probably did. In any case the greed of the father is emphasized and the device pushes the story on to its climax.

v.123

After the repeated cycles comes the first indication of change. The Hare which is probably the most common animal in the tales of Africa is believed to possess such nimble wits that he can overcome the strongest of opponents save the tortoise. It is rare in the stories that this cunning detective like creature is presented in confrontation with a human being. In myth the animals are attributed human personalities, of course, in order to convey specific meanings about human characteristics but seldom are animals with human characteristics mixed in with human beings in the story. Usually it is some large animal which is overcome by beguiling words or deluded by the long story that Hare always has ready. He is also said to possess magical sweet songs which cause sleepiness in his antagonists. Here we find him playing a traditional thumb piano. His appearance raises expectations in the audience particularly as the Hare insists on sitting with the father of Manongo during the boiling of the eggs.

v.125 This beginning of the dialogue with its ethically loaded words putting the greedy self-centred father in the wrong by contrast further raises expectations. "Uncle, I

came to visit you because it is now a long time since I have seen you and my longing to see you was increasing." The audience is triggered to expect a trap for in such a way Hare always catches his victims.

v.127 Frustrated, Manongo's father had no other option within the minimum acceptable norms than to pretend to welcome Hare. His dry and terse response and his preparation of a bed in a hut very far from the secret cooking place, indicate that he does it with uneasiness, knowing that cheating in the presence of the hare could not be successful. A male visitor in those days would have been warmly welcomed and invited to sit with the men of the visited home when something unusual was to be cooked in the night. There stories would help to make the night shorter. Skillfully and tactfully Hare arranged his words and actions including playing on the thumb piano, to cause Manongo's greedy father further frustration and then sleepiness.

v.129

Pangolin, is a ritually significant creature, thought to stand half way between the reptiles and the animals. It is believed to be powerful far beyond its size and to be intelligent enough to lead the followers to the main hut of the leader of their group. Its presence in the nest indicate to the hearers that things can no longer continue as they have thus far. The sequence followed by the eagle in placing the creatures in the nest is not accidental. They appear in increasing order of effectiveness for their purpose. It is not quite true therefore to say that Hare was the first

indicator of change for there has been some building threat to Manongo's father's purpose throughout. But Hare is qualitatively different and Hare's arrival must be re-evaluated in the light of the eagle putting the pangolin in the nest. He is now the herald of whatever change the pangolin's effectiveness will bring about. Pangolin will initiate the end of the repetitive culture but it is not its stagnant quality that is under criticism but its being characterized in this society by greediness and cheating.

Examples of greed and cheating by the menfolk who went out to gather are still fresh in the memories of the older members of the group. They tell a story to illustrate it:

There was a honey gatherer who cheated his wife and children. Every day he went into the forest searching for honey. One day having found a bee-hive he filled a large container with honey. Then he filled a small container from the same hive and, as was his custom, he consumed all that remained. He took the small container to his family and himself shared that honey. Then, while his family were asleep, he went out and dug a hole in the ground into which he put the large container of honey. He put a hollow bamboo into the honey and covered the container with sand so that the bamboo just protruded. Next day he told his wife and children to respect the place where he had buried the honey as his secret dancing place.

Every evening he called his children and they went to that special place. He taught them what to sing and they sang as

follows: "Hunger will kill mother but father is sucking sand." As his children were singing and clapping their hands he danced vigorously and bent down. He sucked at the bamboo straw until his stomach started to protrude in front and at the sides also. This happened every evening.

One day during the father's absence his younger son was very hungry so he persuaded his elder brothers to go with him to their father's secret dancing place. He told them to sing as they sang every evening and the younger son danced and bent down in order to suck sand through the bamboo straw as his father was wont to do. Then the younger son shouted "Boy! Our father is a professional cheater! This is not sand at all but honey!" They called their mother who removed the container from the ground and replaced it with another one filled with water and replaced the sand.

That evening after supper the man called his children and went with them to his secret dancing place. The children sang as they did every evening. At first their father danced vigorously and then bent down to suck at the bamboo straw. Immediately he realized that it was only water. He stopped sucking and told his children that he was not feeling well and that they would postpone the dancing to another evening. Then his wife and children laughed at him and told him that the secret of the dancing every evening had been discovered by the younger son.

It is interesting that it is the youngest son, in this story reflecting memories of the gathering culture, who puts an



end to the situation of dishonesty and greed established by the father, as though to emphasize a generational rejection of the older culture.

v.144 The myth with which we are dealing also reflects this inversion of social norms. Hare would not traditionally have had the audacity to distribute the boiled eggs when Manongo's frustrated father left the scene. To the hearer this would represent a challenge to established norms. Slowly but surely the hearer is introduced to the idea that the old ways of living and the related social structure could no longer be respected by the new generation who were looking for development.

v.148 Manongo's father is now deliberately rude to Hare. It represents a sort of challenge to which Hare responds neither with wit nor magic. Again the hearer is alerted.

v.155 Again when Manongo's father begins his gobbling of the eggs he is attacked, but this time he is not bitten or stung but pangolin "... trapped his hand against a branch." He is caught and he will no more escape the pangolin than he could escape the effects of Hares songs and soothing words.

v.158 Pangolin's words reflect the attitude of Hare to the greed of the father for he contrasts the eagle's generosity, even indulgence, with the act that he has just put an end to. "Eagle, eagle, I have caught him, I have caught him. The eagle is indulgent it threshes for the people, the eagle is soft it breaks open shells for the people."

Perhaps there is here, also an implied criticism of Eagle's connivance in the greed laden gathering culture. The references are not clear but it must be that when the eagle feeds it dislodges or breaks open sources of food later to be gathered by the people. If this is so then Pangolin would seem to want an end, not just to the greed, but of the present centred gathering culture, with no thought of the morrow, that Manongo's father represents and Eagle's previous indulgence supported.

v.161 begins the different versions. In the first Manongo's father is torn to pieces by the angry eagle but it is assumed that it took something (spirit) of Manongo's father with him to the unknown land. It is this scene that opens up the gap between the divine, represented by both the eagle and the unknown land, and mankind; between the present and a significant future. The scene is set for the beginning of the quest to recover what has been lost.

Manongo left the eggs but cut flesh out of the legs of his mutilated father and took it home. (Meat from the legs of an animal is believed to convey strength.)

In this first version, this act begins what S.H.Hooke called prestige myth, doing for Tjakova what the story of exposure in the ark of bulrushes on the Nile did for Moses and what the story of Romulus and Remus did for Rome.<sup>3</sup> There are now three actors on stage who are regarded as more than natural, Eagle, Hare and Tjakova and the hearer looks for it to be a moment of destiny.

In those days it could well happen that an elder son was sent home with meat from the hunt the father arriving with the bulk of the kill the next day.

The mother, who had not previously wanted to eat anything but eagle's eggs is now prepared to eat meat.

There are those who see in this style of the prestige myth an indication already of the move to hunting. It does not seem likely to have been a basic or generally held understanding when account is taken of the other versions.

The second version suggests that the eagle simply carried off Manongo's father alive to the unknown country and that Manongo carried home the eagle's eggs. The difference between this and the third version is that in the latter the unknown land is specified as the country of the eagles, and Manongo is not said to have carried home the eggs but that the mother, having eaten only eagle's eggs for a period of time, has now given birth to an egg. In these versions, particularly the last, the emphasized continuity is between the eagle and Tjakova rather than between the father and Tjakova.

In the first two versions the old woman represents the traditional midwifely wisdom of the old world from which Tjakova is to be born. The muce root, used to impart courage, is part of the whole prestige build-up for Tjakova as is the fact that he is born fully grown.

Another implication of the muce root ceremony is that Tjakova was born in the early morning, for that is the time the ceremony is always performed on the young bulls. This maintains a mythological characteristic. It is said to be generally the case that heroes, wonder children, etc. are born in the morning in order to be able to take their secret journeys in the underworld in the evening.<sup>4</sup>

The social inversion, foreshadowed when Manongo failed to carry out the ritual singing on his way home after the death or disappearance of his father, is realized the moment Tjakova is on the scene and he assumes unquestioned leadership.

Manongo is the legitimate heir to the father within the norms of the old world and while later we will find him prepared to remain with aspects of it that his brother rejects, he is not, as his name has come to mean, stupid. See note b. attached to v.2. Manongo after all, in spite of the few lapses mentioned, goes much, if not all, of the way with his brother.

Those who are stupid are those who, like the nameless old woman who causes the death of Tjakova, seek what Manongo represents rather than the new future that Tjakova symbolizes. It could be, therefore, that Manongo's failure to take over ritual leadership even before the birth of Tjakova represents not only his bowing out to the new leader but the end of the order that he, Manongo, symbolizes.

vv.187-189 These verses establish the future directed movement of the rest of the myth made possible by the carrying away of the father. "Where has my father gone? ..I am going to follow him wherever he has gone." Tjakova and his followers, in the first place just Manongo and Hare, set out to find the father. Had Tjakova said "our father" the referent would have been clear, certainly Manongo understands it that way, but the use of "my father" not only sets Tjakova apart from Manongo but it maintains his link with the eagle via the eggs made explicit in the third version by his birth from the giant egg.

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The scene with the eagle reflects a bit of Hambukushu traditional history. The Hambukushu it will be remembered are the Kavango tribe occupying the eastern-most part of the Kavango area. Their tradition has it that during the migration period and while with the other four groups they were settled at Mashi or Mbunda in the western part of present-day Zambia, several elephant hunters from the tribe tracked a group of elephants until they came to an unknown river which, having found, they named after their chief, Ndara. They then returned to their chief to tell him about the river which they had named after him and the Chief and his group decided to resume their migration and move to the river that later would become the Kavango river. At the river the Hambukushu came upon a huge eagle that they thought to be their god. Every day they walked behind the eagle wherever it flew. Eventually the eagle flew across the Zambesi river. The Hambukushu then divided into three

groups, the largest going back to the eastern-most part of Kavango where they settled down, primarily on the islands in the river. One smaller group remained in the Caprivi Strip the other moved on into present-day Botswana settling primarily at Shakawe on Lake Ngami where they are until today.

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Before entering upon Part II. we must make some general comments about the myth and in particular about unusual features of that would alert hearers familiar with the local traditions.

#### i) History and Myth

It is said of African society that it is backward thinking, that reality lies in the past, that it has little sense of future. There is some truth in this observation but it must not be understood in a negative sense. In a monistic world-view there is little concern with a distant future and the significant quality of time is not linearity, but there is a future to be built. The past is the known, the future unknown. The past is that on which the future is to be built. History is a vital factor in determining the future.

In a situation where goals do not dominate individual existence and therefore specialization in terms of them is not available, identity, indeed prestige, is dependent upon present relationships and upon history, where and what one comes from. In the times to which the myth relates the attitude to life of a child would be mainly determined by

her or his knowledge about the history of the family or clan or even the tribe as a whole. The rituals that linked the new-born to the past were filled out in the telling of the history.

However, in common with other non-literate societies these people were not in bondage to a fixed version of their history. In Africa history rolls on. While the past is respected, so are the needs of those to whom it is taught. History is told to communicate the values of the group to the new generation and to affirm them for the old. If circumstances reshape values, the communication of values may reshape history. While not all myth is history, in this situation the telling of history functions as myth, as the communication of the felt nature of reality.

Such is the importance of the past that in the present myth, concerned as it is with a new future, care is always taken to link the new with the old. The flesh of the father consumed by the mother before the birth of Tjakova links him with the father who represented the old culture. The eggs and the giant egg forge a link with the divinely linked Eagle who is no longer present. Manongo's setting out with Tjakova forms another link. Later we will find Tjakova explicitly taking Jackal, the instrument in his death but also the representative of the poor end of the gathering culture, with him into the final major cycle of the myth.

#### ii) Tjakova as Initiator

We have spoken of two of the unique factors that would be

picked up by the hearer familiar with local tradition, in the transition verses at the end of part one. These were first, the social inversion involved in Manongo's not taking over leadership, including the ritual singing, from the father, and second, the development of a strong future orientation as Tjakova sets out to find his father. There are more.

Traditionally the dialogue following upon Tjakova's birth should have been with the mother and initiated by her.

In the type of story represented by this part of the myth a pregnant woman has to survive after a beast has swallowed the rest of the population. In her hiding place she is supposed to bring the baby into the world and then have to leave him for a brief period upon some domestic errand such as fetching wood or water. When she returns she finds a strong young man at the place where she left her baby and in her shock initiates the following sort of dialogue:

"where is my baby?"

"It is I Mother"

"Where are the people Mother?"

"They have been swallowed by the beast."

"It is somewhere there"

"I am going to kill it"

After a lengthy dialogue the young man goes out to the known place to revenge and rescue the swallowed population.



This is the normal style of the hero myth and would be the expected one here but does not appear. Instead Tjakova initiates a brief, very much to the point, dialogue not even with the mother. He addresses an authoritative question to the world at large and Manongo responds to it. This establishes a sense not only of something new but of authority and urgency, almost efficiency.

This very brief, almost curt style, so unusual in Africa, is maintained by Tjakova from this first dialogue right through to his consultation with Katjetje. In itself it suggests a new sort of world.

That the question is addressed to all and sundry is not accidental. This is not yet a conflict situation as the classical young hero's would be and Tjakova will not, be setting off in solitary splendour but will be leading those who will follow him into a new future.

This myth uses a number of structures and symbols drawn from well recognized types of myth. In particular the hero myth to which we have just referred and, what is a particular kind of hero myth, the journey or path that demands, or has a guardian beast that demands, sacrifices from those who would follow it. This last is the framework used for Part III. For peoples familiar with the sea the struggle is frequently with a giant fish, for those whose context is the land only it is usually, as it will be here, an unspecified monster.

In southern Africa anyway, a hero myth usually ends with the

assassination or at least the driving away of the hero by those whom he has served. This may seem strange but in fact returns the myth from the realm of wishful thinking to that of real experience, and, in a cyclical world-view, completes the cycle so that it might be looked for again. We will return to this when we come to the slaying of Tjakova at the end of Part II.5

### iii) Open-endedness

In all stories of the kind just described the destination of the young hero is known. The mother knows where the beast is and the son is directed there. In all the versions of this story the destination of Tjakova is very clearly unknown and is stressed even to the point of not expressing certainty that he will find the father in the way that the young man expresses certainty that he is going to kill the beast.

"I am going to follow him wherever he has gone"

"I am following him wherever he has gone"

"I am following him wherever it took him"

On the other hand, Tjakova sets off with confidence that he does the right thing suggesting a sort of inevitable providence leading into an unknown future.

## PART II.

v. 190 Tjakova sets off with Hare and Manongo. As indicated above this differs from the usual solitary hero myth.

v.192 In yet another link between past and future, we find Tjakova singing an adapted form of the ritual song. Being what it is, a ritual song, it relates him and his followers, as is the tradition, horizontally and immediately, ensuring a good relationship with path and environment. The content links them via the non-present eagle, symbol of the divine, as it were vertically and to the future. That is, an element of transcendence is introduced. It was the eagle who opened up the gap between the present and the unknown future so its leadership is sought in the quest. The song is repeated throughout the journey.

"Where my father has gone, eagle lead me there, where my father has gone, eagle lead me there, Manongo is stupid, eagle lead me there, he left my father, eagle lead me there, however far it might be, eagle lead me there, I will come there, eagle lead me there."

Where as the early part of the myth was dominated by Thimbukushu, the language of the Hambukushu tribe occupying the eastern-most part of the Kavango area, Tjakova sings his ritual song in Tshiwiko, a language of Angola.<sup>6</sup> In Part III his conversation is mixed with Rugciriku and Rushambyu, the languages of the tribes situated immediately to the west of the Hambukushu, first the Vagciricu and then the Vashambyu.

The reference to Manongo as stupid has been explained. Here it is emphasized because although Manongo sets out on the journey he belongs to the old world with its cultural, social and natural order. Manongo accepts that world and is

not willing to make any effort to improve it or its economic style. We are going to meet this early in the section as, in the course of Tjakova's journey, the old life style unfolds in stereotype. We are presented with scavenging and a lazy way of gathering before we meet the acceptable hunting and a highly rated form of gathering before an attempt to practice agriculture.

v.193ff The first figure that the trio come across is Hyena who, on the request of Tjakova that he provide them with food, makes foolish sounds. The hyena brings old skins and bones to Tjakova who rejects them politely. Manongo on the other hand accepts what Hyena offers with all that that implies.

v.206ff The next figure that the four come across is Jackal. In the folk tales of many cultures, from India through New Guinea to Melanesia, the jackal or its relatives, is regarded much as the fox is regarded in Europe, as cunning in catching out the unwary and in playing misleading tricks. In parts of Africa, mostly in the North-East but also among the Hottentots, Jackal is regarded as a hero. In the Kavango and among the Ovambo and Herero and many of the peoples of Angola, while the cunning remains when he is threatened or in need he is also regarded as lazy. His cunning, therefore, takes the form of adaptability, he bends with the wind. We will meet this characteristic in him later.

Jackal, unlike Hyena who could only make meaningless sounds, sings a ritual song as he goes to gather. The song reflects

Jackal's adaptation to Tjakova for he too condemns Manongo's acceptance of scavenging which he contrasts with his own (in polite plural form) ranging around. What he gathers are the berries that grow around the immediate area. This is the poorest form of gathering and is usually left to the children.

Tjakova politely refuses the berries, Manongo accepts them.

v.218 Having twice delayed the journey, this is the last time that Manongo has an active part in the story. It may be presumed that he goes along but he appears only as one present at the end of the next sequence and is not mentioned thereafter. Tjakova's purpose is always vulnerable because the new world must be born out of the chaos of the old and he must take it with him, but this is ably represented by the presence of the adaptable Jackal. The deliberate desire to frustrate Tjakova's purpose and to move backward finds a clearer representative than Manongo and all but succeeds.

v.220ff The five next meet Lion, the hunter, whose offering is the first that Tjakova will accept. The story reflects both the bad and the good of the old culture.

As lion runs through the forest singing his ritual song relating himself to the natural order and those he refers to as his claws, he does what no actual lion would do, he kills elands one after the other. The hunter, of course, kills for the whole community while the lion kills only for himself and perhaps his mate and cubs, but the suggestion here is

that the style of hunting, like that of gathering, gave no thought for the morrow, a style still prevalent.

On the other hand Lion manifests the traditional humility of the hunter, requesting that Tjakova send his followers to fetch the baby antelope when he has in fact killed many large elands. This too is still the current style.

Lion's reference to his claws as his children remains obscure even after a deliberate attempt to resolve it during the field-work. One suggestion, received from a number of those asked, was that the hunter hunts for the community while the gatherer does it only for himself and immediate family. Another widely supported suggestion was that hunting, unlike the more passive activity of snaring, was not an individual undertaking but was essentially a directed team effort; the lion being the leader, his claws the team.

The story reflects hunting as it is still carried out. One group doing the hunting, others going out to butcher and bring home the meat.

The killing of elands, the largest of the antelopes, signifies the importance of the hunter and the one for whom they hunt. Elands do not come near human habitation but live in groups deep in the forests where they browse on the leaves and young shoots of the trees. Eland meat has always been highly prized and was reserved for the chief and other important persons in a tribe. Until independence, when the hunting season started, the Department of Nature Conservation

killed one eland for each of the five members of the Executive Council of the Administration of Kavango.

This scene creates a boundary between the old and new worlds. It is the last in which Manongo is said to be present. On the other hand, although the hunting style seems to be under criticism, Tjakova accepts the offering of the hunter suggesting that hunting will continue in whatever new world Tjakova represents.

v.231ff The six come to the home of Honeybear.

Honeybear was also an animal with ritual significance. Considered to be so tough that he can absorb any kind of blow and that even lightning could not strike him from a tree, he was thought to live the life of a king, eating only clean honey.

Honey, like the meat of elands, was reserved for chiefs and others of importance. Tjakova accepts the offering of Honeybear, presumably because it represents a superior form of gathering to be carried over into the new age.

Honeybear's ritual song is of special interest.

"...the beauty of Honeybear is that he digs with his snout."

Fieldwork did not provide a unanimous explanation nor a completely satisfactory one. One group suggested that honeygathers in those days gathered honey stored underground, for example in old ant-hills, but not that in

hollow trees, because they did not have axes or other suitable iron tools for the latter but could use digging sticks and hands for the former.

Another group suggested the Honeybear's snout represented the wooden ploughs they call "kanyondo" because such ploughs were made from a particularly tough wood from a tree called "munyondo".

Later the wooden plough would be iron tipped which was an improvement but not nearly as effective as the iron ploughs that were to come still later from the western world. These wooden ploughs could only be used in small planting areas of already loose ground. For example, it would be used on extinct anthills, being carried to the top and then pulled down hill. Simple as it was it represented a distinct advance on the hoe and digging stick.

Given the overall nature of the myth, this last seems to be the principal reference. While Honeybear represents acceptable gathering he also symbolizes agriculture for he has to dig vigorously for what he gathers and is well equipped to do so. He is also closely associated with anthills.

vv.239-266 deal with the death of Tjakova and represent the second major turning point in the myth. Something new is about to take place.



Tjakova, who represents a striving to break away from the old world to find a new one, still needs something from the old. This is represented by fire.

The only symbolic mention of fire before this point in the myth is where it is used in a quite familiar sense to heat the muce roots before the birth of Tjakova. In literal terms it would have been necessary for the cooking of the meat of the elands but is not mentioned. It appears in the myth at each turning point becoming increasingly significant. Its significance in the development of the myth will appear in the next section, here it represents that which you must carry with you from an existing place into a new place and thus symbolically, from the old world into the new world.

Tjakova sends for fire from the old woman who represents the old wisdom and continuity of the tradition and also, perhaps, settled family life and reproduction of the nation. Jackal fails to bring fire because he falls into the trap of, marries and settles down with, the old woman who wants to return to the old ways.

Intelligent Hare is sent to investigate. Jackal answers Hare's calls in a dubious way, suggesting that his situation is temporary, that he is not committed to past or future. However he joins in chasing Hare away, who then fetches his thumb piano in order to charm or seduce the old woman in order to create a situation in which he can steal the fire for Tjakova. Jackal initiates the next step toward the new world, the making of charcoal, by slaying Tjakova.

v.259 Mayenga-Nyambi, who Tjakova, never having met, knows that he must marry, apart from being the name given to stars and moon and, derivatively, to girls, is also used of the iron-ore nodules that can be found at certain sites within this region. Whether the name conveys something of the value attributed to these objects or whether they themselves were regarded as decorative or it was thought that they were fallen stars, is not certain. The context makes it clear that Tjakova is seeking to be wedded to iron-ore that is hidden from him, suggesting its rarity. He even uses Hare's thumb piano to forward his quest.

v.263 The making of the boat, presented as magic, nevertheless reflects the traditional method of making boats by hollowing out tree trunks. Crossing of the river also reflects significant experience in the history of these people. Here, however, it reflects the attempt to reinforce the transition represented by the marriage with Mayenga-Nyambi, by making a final break with the old world. It is then that the old woman incites Jackal to stab and kill Tjakova.

v.266 Without Tjakova, progress comes to a halt and his followers build a kraal, suggesting that the old woman has achieved her purpose.

vv.267-294 These verses, heavy with symbolic reference, are the climax of Part II. Here the agricultural reference is explicit. The men cut down trees and clear the ground for

planting, but without leadership and without hope. The frog jumping around is a symbol of rain and of hope in the agricultural venture. There is the widespread resurrection theme concerning trees that grow again having been cut down,<sup>7</sup> and in the end Tjakova himself resurrects. This may refer to land that regenerates each year over against cut and slash methods or the use of extinct anthills, or longer periods of low rainfall in which the natural vegetation is allowed to reassert itself to be again cleared in times of good rain. The sense here of a repeated struggle with nature and climate is very important. (See the remark of Susanna Runguro toward the end of chapter 4) All of this section, however, including the death and burial, symbolizes the making of charcoal. When large quantities of scrub trees had been cut down, charcoal was prepared in this area, by burying the burning wood in a hole in the ground, where it remained for many days until the process had run its course and the "grave" was cool. Then the charcoal was produced.<sup>8</sup>

The short Thimbamba sequence is infrequently included in the telling of the myth but the omission of it from the proposed definitive text produced a protest from every person to whom the text was shown and we had to reverse our decision. The section clearly symbolizes the establishment of a period of relatively stable agriculture the other side of the ground clearing and it was repeated after each repetition of that sequence. To one of the persons consulted the organized protection of the grain store symbolized not only agriculture but also poor harvests.

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The strong and universal protest about the omission of a section that is infrequently included in the telling, makes an important point of difference between the oral and written preservation of myth. In the oral situation a variant may be included only often enough for its existence to be known by the community. For the rest of the time its symbolic significance can be implied by the telling of that section with which it would be linked, in this case the ground clearing sequence. In this situation it would be more important to stress the repetitive struggle toward agriculture than to symbolize all its well known aspects. In the written situation, to leave out the Thimbamba section is to miss the point of the ground clearing and of its repetition. It is the equivalent of leaving it out every time in the oral situation.

It also throws light on the strong survival of those variants which reflect the earlier history of the people, but do not well fit the current reality. The variants reflect aspects of a broader experience but do not have to supplant the one reflecting more current experience, because where variants are known to exist all of them come to the edge of consciousness when one of them is chosen. In the written situation all of them must be set out for the same richness of experience to pervade the reading as pervades the reciting.

It is to be noted that Thimbamba's exclamation to each animal as he shoots it "Let us go" reflects lion's exclamation to the elands that he hunted for Tjakova. It is

not a usual ritual exclamation for a hunter and so one supposes the reflection is deliberate, but what it is is not clear unless it suggests that the drive for agriculture requires the same valor and dedication required of that prototypic hunter.

#### The Name Tjakova.

We indicated earlier that the name Tjakova, unlike Manongo and Mayenga-Nyambi, has no meaning in the primary language of the myth, nor in the languages of the other four Kavango groups, nor in any of the other languages drawn upon, nor indeed in any of the languages of the area. It has come to have the meaning for people that the character has in the myth but is not given to children. There is, of course, a link between -kova and Kova-ngo but it is apparent only, not linguistically significant.

There is no doubt that the section of the myth in which Tjakova dominates represents the hopes and the struggles of the move to an iron implemented agriculture, nor that Mayenga-Nyambi represents the iron stone nodules available in the area. The section just commented upon, in which cutting of timber, fire, burying, and waiting, are associated, even though the events are in an order designed to convey the other meanings indicated, carries the clear indication that since his death and resurrection, anyway, Tjakova represents charcoal. Equally the equation:

Mayenga-Nyambi + Tjakova + Fire = Iron Ore + X + Fire

leaves no doubt what Tjakova represents.

To this point there is no problem and fieldwork confirms the understanding. There is, however, a likely connection that is no longer understood by the people whose myth it is, if indeed it ever was understood.

To an outsider anyway, to hear people of the area say Tjakova and then to hear them say the English word charcoal, is to be struck by the similarity. The emphases are the same, the L in charcoal is lost and the V in Tjakova is so weak as to be almost lost. This raises all sorts of questions that cannot be answered. Where and when did these people have contact with the English or with people who had had contact with the English? In present-day Zambia or Botswana? Did they bring the art of smelting from their probable place of origin in north-east Africa, in which it was an art from ancient times, or did they learn or re-learn it nearer to their present locality and from those with contact with the English language.

Needless to say, the words for charcoal in those European languages with which these people had prolonged contact, German, Portuguese and later, Afrikaans, do not sound at all similar.

If the contact with the English is assumed, then it is likely to have been via Botswana, with which, as indicated earlier, there was sufficient association for the sacred mountain in their myth of origin, to be located there. It then becomes a matter of interest how early one can date sufficient English influence in Botswana.

However, what is at stake here is not the dating of the elements that make up the myth nor even of its over-all form but only a possible source of the present name of the principle character. At best, a correlation of presence in Botswana, if it could be obtained, would only add a small piece of evidence to a dating process much more dependent upon identifiable historical experiences reflected in the story. All that is required to explain the association, if it exists, is that the first recounter of the myth in its present form had heard charcoal referred to by that name, and in looking for a name for his symbolic character chose it. The connection could be many times removed.

Hence, while the author has little doubt that this is indeed the source of the name, the issue has not been allowed to become a major one in the project, nor, hopefully, to exercise any influence in the analysis of the myth.

vv.295-297 This scene marks the climax of the second part of the myth. It returns the hearer to the celebration that would have followed the marriage, when Mayenga-Nyambi was produced by her attendants in the midst of the dancing place. It now celebrates the return of Tjakova with his added significance, and it is he who is now presented at the centre of the celebration. It celebrates the marriage, that is it celebrates the availability of iron for agriculture. It is this which gives justification to the embroidering of the scene with the sub-scene concerning Mayenga-Nyambi's little brother guarding the threshing floor.



This is the last high note for some time. A new cycle is about to begin, this time one of struggle. There is, however, a crossing of the river which occurs in two variants. The first is associated with the first two versions set out earlier and the second is associated with version three.

vv.298-303 In the first variant, which is a final look back, Tjakova makes a new boat in order to cross the river and all his followers including Jackal enter it, leaving only the symbol of the old world, the old woman, behind on the far bank. There she sings a ritual song concerning the extinction of her world in Thimbukushu. Tjakova turns back and curses the scene, bringing the waters up to wash it and her away.<sup>9</sup> This type of flooding is certainly within the group memory, not least from the times when most of them dwelt on the larger islands in the river. Tjakova will now adopt Rukwangali, the language of the Vakwangali who occupy the western-most area of the Kavango region.

The variant associated with version three, in relating how Tjakova rescues, single handed, the father who was carried away to the land of the eagles, either closes the myth or represents the view that, at this stage in the myth, the actors believe that they have arrived at their destination, symbolizing, presumably, a similar stage in communal memory. In this form the story is more like a traditional hero myth save that the killing of Tjakova precedes rather than follows his success. We referred to this feature of African

hero myths when discussing the birth of Tjakova and the start of his journey.

Part III begins with Tjakova and his party setting out Westward and with Tjakova singing his same ritual song, until they meet the monster moving Eastward and speaking the language of the Eastern-most group.<sup>10</sup> Tjakova is expected to sacrifice something to the monster each time it runs around and comes out ahead of him thus setting up the third and last main cycle in the myth.<sup>11</sup>

It is tempting to associate this with universal themes of paths that lay demands on those who would follow them, and of the East-West movement of the sun, and with the struggle between day and night, particularly as there is an undertone of a hero myth even in the main version. In other situations it might have reflected the flow of the rivers toward the sea. Here, unexpectedly, the significant river flows east. However, whatever more universal experiences may contribute to the setting of this section of the myth, we do not in this case have to look for the significant experience in which the struggle is set, beyond the history of a people engaged in migration over many generations, from east Africa to their present location in Namibia in the south-west.

As Mayenga-Nyambi was known to Tjakova before he met her so Tjakova is known to the monster. It is not an accidental meeting but a necessary conjunction. It becomes clear that the struggle represented is that between the new agriculture and mother earth.

Tjakova sacrifices his followers, his wife, his bow and arrow (the symbol of his leadership with which he sprang from the womb) and finally himself.

v.355 The last cycle, in which he is vomited back, may be repeated many times in the telling to emphasize the struggle. It is customary to repeat it in each telling the same number of times as Tjakova's putting up of the trees is repeated. Then comes this summary statement to the same effect. It is also the turning point of the cycle. When Tjakova decides not to be vomited out again it is indicative that the myth is about to take a new direction.

vv.356-370 In this section we get the first explicit reference to charcoal and then to the smelting process, by implication, in the mention of bellows. The section has a mixture of motifs.

Clearly charcoal and bellows do not make "thick columns of smoke". Thick columns of smoke would be in the experience of these people when once a year, in the spring, all the scrub trees and bush cleared from planting grounds throughout the year are burnt. To a lesser extent a column of smoke is associated with the making of charcoal, not with its burning.

Then the image of the monster plunging its hot self into pool after pool of water causing it to evaporate immediately may have reference to what is done to the lump of iron taken

from the smelter or, more likely, to the forging and hardening of iron implements.

Overall there are images suggestive of the clearing of ground for agriculture, the making of charcoal, smelting, forging and hardening of implements. All of these are part of the process that overcomes the monster, earth. Although there is no direct mention of the shortage of water for agriculture, there is the image of dried up water holes and of the hot and thirsty monster, having consumed all the best efforts of mankind, consuming all the available moisture.

No amount of effort with the best technology will succeed without water.

With death the monster will become the fertile womb from which agricultural richness will flow. An image of well watered rich soil, perhaps, that has been missing from the situation thus far.

vv.371-409 In so far as there is a hero myth in the background, the hero has now slain the beast and would normally be the one to open it and release the captives. Here, however, Tjakova, although able to leave the monster himself, chooses not to try to open the monster but goes to seek someone to do it for him. It is understood by the hearers that, as there is no mention of vomiting, Tjakova leaves the beast by the back passage having been as it were digested in the chaos of the stomach. This not only breaks the cycle but suggests fertility.

The tapping-beetle and the water tortoise are both harbingers of rain and they send Tjakova on to Katjetje.

Katjetje is a water bird and water is the unspoken need throughout this section, but Katjetje is used here to symbolize something else.

When Katjetje dives for fish he cuts a silver furrow across the surface of the water. Here he is asked by Tjakova to cut open the monster which, as the ploughing was done, he does by returning after each cut to the same end to begin the next. He asks for bags of grain as his reward for the task as was done by those who owned ploughs, and for cooked grain over and again while he works, which probably symbolizes the grain that woman would sow in the new furrows while men and oxen rested. That the fisher bird probably does not eat grain only serves to emphasize the purpose of the ploughing. When the monster finally bursts open it is with all the fecundity of the emptying of Noah's ark.

There can be little doubt that Katjetje represents the advent of the steel plough and that he at one point speaks a language of Angola, suggests that the north is the acknowledged source of such.

The myth concludes with Katjetje as the main actor and Tjakova in the background. Katjetje returns home, paid for his labours. Neither "hero" is slain or driven away by his followers as they might be in the classic hero myth of southern Africa. Tjakova's father is not found, the land of the eagles is not arrived at, the underlying issue of water

is not resolved. The myth is not closed but remains open. Which takes us to the second level of analysis.

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1 This was the late Dr. Romanus Kampungu, a member of the Vakwangali tribe.

2 Werner, A (1932) Myths and Legends of the Bantu. London pp.207-208

3 Hooke S.H., Middle Eastern Mythology, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1963. pp.14-15.

4 Frobenius L. Zeitalter des Sonnen-gottes

5 This example of a Hero myth is taken from old Basotholand. The hero's name is Senkatane and that of the beast is Kholumolumo. In many versions it ends with the assassination or driving out of the hero.

6 Myths of children looking for one or both parents are not uncommon. It is not clear why Tjakova begins his journey looking for his father by singing his ritual song in a language of Angola. It may be that a myth concerning a son's quest for a lost father was at some time current among those speaking the Tshiwiko language. If so its source is lost to memory in the Kavango. There is a similar story from Angola, however, which suggests that borrowing may have taken place. It may be summarized as follows:

A certain boy having grown up with his grandmother, learned from her that his mother had been swallowed by an ogre. The son with his spear and bow and arrow, set off for the village of the ogres. There he dug a deep hole in the path and called all the ogres to jump over the hole one by one. Before jumping each sang "It was me who ate your father, it was me who ate your mother, a small anus is moving, a small anus is moving". Each of the younger ogres jumped over then the leader of the ogre village came to jump over it. When he tried to jump he fell into the bottom of the pit. The son killed the ogre and cut him up into small pieces but he could not find his mother although he could hear her talking to him from somewhere in the body of the ogre. Finally the son cracked the ogre's big front tooth and found his mother inside. The son and his mother returned home.

7 See, for example, Job 14:7, the banana tree among the Lele, and the Rata myth from the New-Hebrides recorded by Frobenius in Zeitalter des Sonnen-gottes. The last has some seemingly fortuitous parallels with the present myth. It may be summarized as follows:

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There was a boy who was on his way looking for his parents. He came across a bird which was fighting a snake. The bird appealed to the boy for his aid in killing the snake. The boy refused and began cutting down large trees with which to make a big boat to cross the sea. In the night the bird came and put up again the chopped down trees and all the work that the boy did became futile. He therefore decided to help the bird kill the snake. After that the boy was able to build his boat and to find the whale that had swallowed his parents. The whale swallowed the boy and his boat. In the stomach of the whale he found his parents and others that the whale had swallowed. These he rescued by starting a large fire that killed the whale and made possible their escape.

8 Today, different narrators differ in the telling of this part of the myth. Those influenced by the Christian tradition are likely to add that Tjakova's body was shining, those influenced by both Christianity and Western culture are likely to add that he was dressed in white shining Western clothes with shoes and socks.

9 Again recounters of the myth under Christian influence may include far fetched aspects of the Biblical flood story.

10 The word translated as Monster in this translation has the same meaning as those in neighbouring languages that have been translated variously as giant, beast, ogre, goblin, dragon and monster. Beast sounded too literal and the others seemed to carry connotations that were out of place. Monster seemed only to suggest size and formidableness so it was preferred. Katjetje's reference to it as "your elephant" is perhaps the only touch of humour in a very serious myth.

11 As indicated in note 5 above the cycle of conflict with the monster is a familiar type of myth. Another example of the type from the same area is that of the Ndonga tribe of Ovamboland. It is the story of "Nehoya in the stomach of a beast" which may be summarized as follows:

Nehoya was not enjoying a good relationship with her parents so she decided to depart and join a related neighbouring tribe. On her way she met a beast which demanded that Nehoya sacrifice something to the path. Nahoya therefore asked what sort of sacrifice was appropriate. She had to sacrifice her own child. After a while Nehoya met the same beast and gave him fowls which he swallowed. Next time Nahoya had to sacrifice herself. In the stomach of the beast Nehoya found a world. The beast came to a place where Nehoya's two sisters lived. They cooked and gave to the beast a large quantity of beans. Because he had eaten so many beans he became thirsty and drank much water. This made the beans grow bigger and bigger until the beast exploded and all the captives were rescued.

## CHAPTER 7

### THEORIES AND APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF MYTH

#### INTRODUCTION

It is now some decades since scholars became aware of the universality of symbolic forms and in particular of the universality of the symbolic content of myth. Such is the universality across the world from ancient times until the present that much study of myth has been the endeavour to explain how this came about.

Similarity, it has been suggested, could be the result of diffusion from a common source or sources, commonality in basic human experience, limits set to human thought and communication processes or any mixture of these. None of these represent what will be our primary approach to myth but each poses questions which it might be profitable to ask of any myth and we therefore introduce them here.



"evolutionism"

Evolutionism as a movement owed much to the influence of Charles Darwin and his theories. Evolution was in the air in the latter part of the nineteenth century and it moved far beyond the biological realm. Thus scholars influenced by this movement saw in older traditional tales of all kinds remnants of an earlier world view and ideas about man and his environment.

A group of scholars who could be seen as a sub-group of this movement were known as Euhemerists, after Euhemerus a Sicilian writer, who suggested that traditional tales, especially so called heroic tales, drew heavily upon "antecedent historical personalities and their experiences." (Okpewho p.2)

The Euhemerists considered the primitive mind too unsophisticated to be able to conceive of the single supreme god of the monotheistic religions. Rather primitive man was very open to the influence of the significant personalities of the past to whom they responded with a mixture of wonder, terror, admiration and such like basic emotions. Out of this situation arose their ability to conceive a variety of fabulous beings in which they personified these emotions and then submit themselves to, what the Euhemerists termed, an irrational pantheon.

There would not be many today who would wish to speak of an evolution of mentality from the primitive, not at least in

the time scale represented by known myths. Change in socio-economic conditions and therefore of the experienced reality that myth represents, of the images upon which it can draw and even of the style of its discourse (metaphoric or otherwise) is, of course, another matter. It is perhaps reasonable to regard such change, in overall perspective, as progress and to speak of it as evolution. Certainly a question that one would wish to ask of any myth is "what current experience and culture does it represent and what earlier stages of experience might be reflected in its imagery?"

#### "diffusion" theories

The diffusion theory argued that the widespread similarity in myth and other symbolic forms was best accounted for by postulating a common source and then the development of local characteristics. Those for whom the Biblical tradition was the 'truth' necessarily regarded the process as degeneration. Others placed the source in Egypt.

Given the communication possibilities of the past, diffusion as a primary explanation is not tenable and we will not be much concerned with it. Where elements of a myth are appropriated from and the paths they might have travelled and indeed the paths that their possessors might have travelled is, however, an interesting study and could be part of our present concern.

"polygenesis" theories

Certain opponents of the diffusion idea argued for the separate origin of myths. They attributed similarities to the independent working of a common human imagination (whether the result of common experience or common thought processes) confronted by similar profound experiences.

Indeed there is much profound experience that is universal or near universal. Earth and sky, day and night, male and female, birth and death, are universal; land and sea, heat and cold, hunger and plenty, war and peace are near universal. Such is the obvious universality of much that really matters in human experience, that some have felt it necessary to move in the other direction and justify the differences that have arisen.

It is possible to combine diffusion and polygenesis in all sorts of ways and to trace the spread in both time and space of elements of myth characteristic of numerous original sources as well as identifying universal motifs. It is the case as Okpewho writes that "So many schools of thought have sprung up around the study of the oral narrative - each striving to demonstrate the limitations of the previous one - that it is tempting to see them as mutually exclusive" (Okpewho p.1)

It is important not to regard different approaches as mutually exclusive.

four sources of similarity in myth

Cumpsty lists the sources of similarities in myth, excluding diffusion, under four heads as follows:-

- a) similarities in profound experiences, universal and near universal,
- b) regularities in human ways of (1) perceiving, (2) conceiving and, if different, (3) communicating,
- c) the object of experience and
- d) the limits set to the modelling of a reality to which one would belong. (p.316)

Heading (a) speaks for itself. We note with Cumpsty, however, that the object here, from our point of view, is

.. not (to) be in the position of taking things that are a universal feature of being human and drawing local conclusions from them, when there are in fact no locally specific contributing factors. Equally we must not let our awareness of universal features mask local factors that would influence myth formation and modification in a similar direction.

He also notes that it is not an independent factor.

If we ask ... what makes profound experience profound, the answer would have to include what is already believed about the nature of reality.

"structuralism"

Structuralism is not limited to anthropology nor have its point of departure there, but our first concern is with a group of anthropologists.

This group, with Claude Levi-Strauss as its recognized leader and Edmund Leach as its principal representative in the English-speaking world, have attempted to analyse myth by studying the structure of human communication processes.

Levi-Strauss formulated his basic proposition as early as 1949: "... the world of symbolism is infinitely varied in content, but always limited in its laws." (Maranda p.11)

Levi-Strauss considers the units of mythological structure to be sentences and therefore "that the analysis of myth should proceed like the analysis of language." "In both language and myth the separate units have no meaning by themselves, they acquire it only because of the way that they are combined." 1

The contribution of structuralists such as Lévi-Strauss suggests that much of the meaning of myth lies deep in its structure, not in the surface material which conveys what the teller of the tale consciously intends. In this they have gone back to Freud's awareness of the importance of the unconscious if not to his understanding of its functioning.

That one level of communication of a myth lies somewhere deep and is not always conscious we will be at pains to show, but that does not mean that we accept the structuralist position on myth.

On the contrary, we accept, with Cumpsty, that while

"The structural analysis of narrative seems to provide a useful tool and not to raise extraneous problems (narrative, after all, is simply a form within language), The structural analysis of myth is a more dubious enterprise." (p.300)

The problem is, as with many other writers on myth, that they have dealt with myth as a self-defining category. This has allowed them to reduce myth to a linguistic process for the overcoming of contradictions in experience. There are contradictions in experience and humans need to overcome them. Myth is one way in which this might be attempted and therefore the work of structuralists on myth is not without value, but as Cumpsty says:

Even if there were no oppositions, there would be a need for identity and therefore for myth. .. identity and a sense of belonging can equally be threatened by harmony, by having nothing to raise the consciousness of unity and belonging. (p.310)

To do a structural analysis of myth per se, without first saying what myth is, means that myth is understood to be self-defined and presumably by its structural form. I, on the other hand, understand myth to be a tool of religion and therefore to be defined by

its function in relation to religion. Religion is the primary fact, not myth. (p.305)

In summary, he goes on to say, that if the primacy of religion had been acknowledged, then the treating of myth as a static entity might also have been avoided. Instead, it might have been viewed within the processes of its ongoing production and modification. It would then have been clear that myth never is the creative output of one person consciously weaving a significant tale. It only becomes myth when it becomes the possession of the tradition community where there will be mechanisms for its modification, largely at the level of producing what feels right. From the beginning this process could have been likened to corporate psychoanalysis, and to have embraced all the limits set for human communication.

While there are contradictions in experience being overcome in the Tjakova myth these can be revealed in other ways and we will not, at this time, employ the techniques of those structuralists who have given their attention to myth. The structural analysis of narrative, however, is, as Cumpsty suggested above, another matter. He adds:

I hold it to be beyond doubt, that just as there are rules within which meaning is conveyed at the level of the sentence, so there are rules or normative structures in operation at more general levels in the processes of communication. (p.301)

The work done by structuralists on narrative suggests that:

It is a universally recognizable form, regardless of the culture or language in which it is located.

The presence of that normative structure alerts one to the fact that what one is receiving is narrative and not some other form of discourse.

It alerts one to what is to be expected of, and to be done with, the meaning and feeling possibilities of the sentences. (This would be different if one understood a text to contain legal or scientific material.)

The structure is not always completed in a particular narrative, but such is its normative nature, that when any part of it is present and recognized, the rest is expected. (This establishes the possibility of generating meanings and feelings when the normative structure is modified.)

The analysis of narrative reveals the structural means by which human beings communicate about choices and value conflicts, abstracted from time, place and individuals.

In the end narrative appears as a structural form in the realm of language with real persons and real places deconstructed into timeless, spaceless contrasts. It is the arena in which human beings consider abstracted values.



The student of religion has an interest in the level of abstraction at which the feeling for present reality is expressed, that is, whether the language is almost the literal description of representative parts of experience, both immediate and historical, or whether it has moved toward a more universal statement of reality's essential nature. In so far as narrative is the vehicle, and in so far as the persons, times and places of the myth are those of a people's own experience then it may appear to be operating only at the first level. Structural analysis at least suggests that one should look behind the natural and familiar surface to see what more universal statement is being made. The same would apply, of course, to narrative that did not call upon the familiar to enflesh the story, but then that would be less likely to deceive the observer. (Cumpsty p.306). Cumpsty adds:

Having said this, it does not require structural analysis to tell us that places and times, characters and activities are defined as they go, or that a story will be experienced differently if it has been heard before. Nor does it require structural analysis to tell us that a narrative is inter alia defining whatever or whoever moves the whole story, be it chance or fate, tao or deity, or simply reality. (p.303)

In the end, when the student of religion is concerned with myth, he or she is concerned with meaning and feeling. That is all. Knowledge of how the meaning and feeling is conveyed is a secondary consideration.

Knowledge of the processes by which they are conveyed would only be significant if it contributed to a grasp upon meaning and feeling by those who, because they are not part of the culture, are not conditioned to grasp these immediately.

Meaning is essentially conscious. Therefore any meaning that was revealed by analysis that would not grasp, or be grasped by, any in the culture, is not a deeper meaning, but an invented meaning. Feelings too, are conscious, but what shapes how a person feels may be hidden deep in the unconscious and be communicated in ways that are not normally conscious. Students of religion are as interested in how people might be 'not conscious of not belonging' as they are in how people are 'conscious of belonging'. Therefore they have a primary interest in what is conveyed at both conscious and unconscious levels. How it is conveyed is not their primary interest. (p.304f)

We will not be engaging in a full-scale structural analysis of this myth and it will have to suffice that we seek to remain aware of the constraints imposed by the narrative macro-grammar (as we seek to remain aware of constraints imposed by other considerations) and not allow ourselves to draw erroneous conclusions from them.

We will need to show for example that the cycles in the myth do in fact reflect experience and are not simply a device of narrative.

We will not be attempting a full-scale structural analysis because our primary concern is a religious analysis and not a linguistic one and, for the supportive purpose that it would serve, the task is simply too difficult.

There would be no sense in carrying out a structural analysis on this text in English translation, for that is our own approximation. Given the highly metaphorical style of the Kavango languages, the translation itself was difficult enough, how much more difficult would be a structural analysis.

Then there is the particular problem of the use of a variety of languages to convey meanings. It would need to be translated into one language and the meanings conveyed by the changes would need to be spelled out in that one language, before analysis could begin. Where the change in language implied a particular location or direction of movement that could be expressed in literal language, but where it is a move into ritual, the nuances would be very difficult to express. What is being conveyed, and what is failing to be conveyed, when a traditional Catholic resorts to Latin or a modern Anglican shifts into Elizabethan English for corporate or even personal prayer.

Finally, while in all cases it seems that a structural analysis depends upon a breakdown into units on the basis of a prior semantic analysis, in this case the mutual interdependence of the semantic content and the syntactic structure goes very deep. It will be seen in the second

level of analysis, that the whole meaning of the myth is dependent upon which ideal "type" of religion one views it from. In the one Tjakova is the subject, the one sent with, what is in the end the message, in the other he is an extension of the problem and the myth breaks down quite differently. It would seem to need two quite separate analyses, or worse, an analysis of a narrative with a mixed world-view and probably bridging symbols that do not share fully in either logic. Altogether, the possible fruits of a full scale structural analysis do not seem to justify the investment. As we said above our primary concern is a religious analysis, not a linguistic one.

Nevertheless, there are within the developed armoury of the structural analyst of narrative some weapons that may well lead us to ask enlightening questions of our text and these we will employ. While we will be using them out of context, they need to be understood in context. For present purposes, therefore, we have chosen to opt selectively for the technique of narrative analysis suggested by Jean Calloud [Structural Analysis of Narrative, Daniel Patte (trans), (Philadelphia, Fortress, 1976)] and interpreted by Daniel Patte. [What is Structural Exegesis? (Philadelphia, Fortress, 1976)].

Calloud's work draws heavily upon that of A.J.Greimas who in turn drew upon the work of V.Propp and E.Souriau. He also draws upon Roland Barthes and F. de Saussure among others.

We begin with a summary of Calloud's position.

## JEAN CALLOUD ON THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE

The analysis of narrative, Calloud says, "begins with a text that may be readable and yet hides the rules of the game. It ends when a SYSTEM or an immanent STRUCTURE is brought to light." (p.3.) Structural analysis has similar goals to "discourse analysis (semiotics) [which] aims at exploring the SYSTEM underlying the manifestation (the text as it presents itself to the reader) in the same way as linguistics delineates the structure of "language" through the analysis of "speech" (parole)." (p.4.) The question is "How can one perform such "conversions" from text to system?" (p.6.)

.. the analyst's quest in the present stage of research must be tentative. At the outset of his research, the analyst needs to "pre-vision" what is the general framework (or at least some features) of the system." This pre-vision "as analogous to a linguistic system, can be expected to contain a morphology (units that can be classified), a syntax (rules for the combination of the units) and a semantics (consequent "meaning effects")." The present concern is "the morpho-syntactic structures", that is, the rules which establish a set of limits to the possibilities within the structure of a text. (p.6.)

In order to be truly "structural", the text system must be exclusively relational. In it there cannot be any self-contained term, any fixed point. Everything must

be defined in terms of relation. Not to apply this principle is the most common weakness in structural analysis." (p.7.)

The more one remains on the surface of a text, the more its elements seem to have meaning in themselves: it seems that they can be defined totally in terms of their own content. By contrast, the more one considers a text in terms of structure, the more the units are broken down and disclose their relational status and their participation in an endless network of correlations in which "everything is difference. (p.8.)

One needs to ask "'What happens in the text?" Not in the life setting or time of its composition ... not in the mind or subconscious of the author ... not in the rest of his work ... but in the specific section of the text under examination. This question may be surprising for somebody who has never considered a text as a stage on which something could "happen" ... for somebody who has never acknowledged that logical operations (such as affirmation, negation, conjunction, disjunction, attribution, modalization, etc) are in their own ways "happenings". (p.9.)

The first stage in pre-visioning a text, after reading it, is to "establish a plan which divides the textual surface in terms of the "joints" of the content apprehended during the reading." (This need for "meaning" at the starting point of a structural analysis has raised questions.) (p.11.)

At this point Calloud introduces the idea of a "Lexie", a "unit of reading", which according to Roland Barthes is "the best possible space in which one can apprehend meaning". It may be part of a sentence, a sentence, or a number of sentences. It is the minimum space in which something happens but not too much. Each "happening" in a lexie is the establishment of a relation, an actor is related to himself, another, some inanimate object, or a quality. (p.12.)

The next stage is to expand all elliptic or condensed sections of the text and to convert passive statements into their active form. "When this is done, the text appears as ... material in which there are two or three types of threads: the actors, the processes, and the qualifications." The last two can be viewed as belonging together. The lexies can also be classified into two categories: function and qualification (narration / description) also one notes whether the text is first or second person, and deictics (that is whether here or there, now or then, this or that), comparisons, evaluations. "On the basis of this ... the analyst can record ... the "happenings" of the text." (p.13.)

".. the elements which constitute the lexie are the actors and the processes. (p.14.)

The lexies manifest elementary syntactic forms which Calloud calls canonic narrative statements." "Statement" is here understood to be a unit of narrative grammar.

Narrative statement constitutes the minimal formal framework in which the basic elements of the narrative grammar can be

manifested and interrelated. Such basic elements are the Actants and the Functions. Thus, the term "narrative statement" connotes at least two basic elements. It is a "syntactic unit", within its boundaries the simplest correlation of elements takes place. "These basic elements are defined by their ability to become associated with each other according to the rules of the narrative syntax." Each canonic statement, because defined by means of abstract and general types of relation, is invariant and can become the model and generator of a great number of concrete linguistic statements. Constructing the canonic statements out of the linguistic statements is the crucial and difficult step in the procedure. (p.14.)

This study of lexies shows the correlations which constitute the meanings at the surface of the text. The result is a list of processes performed by and on the actors. The actors are relatively stable, just proper nouns with little or no meaning. The processes are as variable as meanings for verbs. (p.15.)

The first operation is to reduce this great number of variables to a few invariants to produce classes (a taxonomy) of processes. Verbs may first be divided into "doing" and "being-having". Thus predicates may be functions (actions) or qualifications. (p.16.)

Greimas further divides "Doing" into "Somatic (physical) doing", "Communicative doing", "Interpretive doing" and "Persuasive doing". (p.24.)



The following categories of function are usually taken into consideration.

Arrival vs. Departure	.. interrelated according
Departure vs. Return	to category "movement" or "presence/absence".
Conjunction vs. Disjunction	Encounter of personages with other personages, or their separation. Relation of spatial contiguity.
Mandating vs. Accepting (or vs. Refusal)	An action is explicitly or implicitly proposed to an actor who accepts/refuses. Interrelation according to category "transitivity of the action or of volition".
Confrontation (or Affrontment)	.. raises special problems. Two actors confronting one another are exactly in symmetric positions. Could be viewed as a binary opposition: Confrontation vs Association on bases of category Exclusion vs. Integration. .. same problem with "actantial" positions "helper/opponent."

Domination vs. Submission      Victory vs. Defeat as end-product of Confrontation.

Communication vs. Reception      Along axis of the transmission (or transfer) of an kind of "objects".

Attribution vs. Deprivation      Another way to express preceding function by opposing it to its negative form.

The above form the "grid" within which processes can be reduced and classified. (p.17f.)

As the processes can be reduced into functions and qualifications so actors can be reduced to "actantial roles". They vary much as processes do, for persons in a narrative are names without content (a syntactic invariant), until they weave in and out of the story leaving small "crystals" of meaning because of the processes to which their name is related, "crystals" that are in need of integration if the narrative is to hang together. Thus there are classes of actantial roles parallel with the classes of function. (p. 19f.)

The reduction of processes and actors leave two products: constants, that is, classes, and "residues". These last will become important when the semantic or stylistic systems become the object of analysis. (p.20.)

"The interpretation of modalities and transformations is an essential and difficult stage of the analysis. Narrativity is, first of all, manipulation of modalities, exploitation of transformations .." (p.21.)

Calloud focuses on the practice of narrative analysis: how to recognize and list modalized statements.

Greimas, says Calloud, recognizes three main modalities, volition, power (able to), cognition. Todorov points to a larger number of "transformations" of which the "modalities" are peculiar cases. He postulates six "simple" and six "complex" "transformations". The 'simple' include "negation" as a transformation of "status", and "succeeding" as a transformation of "result". The 'complex' includes "imagining" as a transformation of "subjectivation" or "knowledge". Example the narrative statement "Peter enjoys Paul's visit" is equivalent to "Paul visits Peter" transformed by an attitude. (p.22f)

Calloud then moves from canonic statements to the canonic syntagm. "Narrative statements are characterized by their ability to form a chain." ... not haphazardly ...but on the basis of relations predetermined by a syntax (rules of combination). "The functions follow one another according to a predetermined order, as words do in sentences." This ordering of statements creates the next size up of textural space, called a syntagm, defined in terms of the system not the performance.

The following syntagms are usually recognized:

Contractual syntagms. Comprised of two functions that are successive and symmetrical, mandating and accepting. They are the initial phase, overt or implicit, of the narrative: an actor is invited, compelled, enabled by someone or something to perform a program of action. It can take a negative form: that is, be broken or never established.

Disjunctional syntagms. Comprised of the successive functions: arrival and departure, departure and return. The "logic" of the actors' movements and encounters with other actors, that, in crossing narrative space, give them the "crystals" of meaning that build their identities. They provide the "locus" of the narrative.

Performancial syntagms. These represent a central point of transformation, a place of "decision" and of denouement."

They are made from a succession of three statements:

- i) Confrontation : The two actors in opposition are confronted by each other.
- ii) Domination : One of the two opposite endeavors which characterize them must succeed, the other must fail.
- iii) Attribution : As a final result, the victorious actor receives an 'object' (attribution) which will be used to fulfill a lack.

Several performancial syntagms can be found in the same narrative and are characterized by different objects. What Vladimir Propp called "the villainy" belongs to this type of syntagm. Thus, statements can be included in superior hierarchic units. (Calloud p.26.)

Greimas reinterpreted Propp's analysis of Russian folk tales by recognizing that they were built on the paradigm of three sequences of these three syntagms, each sequence differing only in its communicated object. He describes each sequence as a "test", thus:

Qualifying test for the communication of vigour  
Main test for the communication of value or goods  
Glorifying test for the communication of the  
message

Calloud seems to generalize the use of the titles of these "test sequences" to the discussion of narrative as a whole without showing why that is possible, adding that what is one type of test at one level of the analysis may be another type at another level.

The recognition that within narrative there are three types of syntagm in characteristic succession is the first aspect of Calloud's approach that we will draw upon. Just these three constitute a narrative. They might be described as the establishment of the problem within the problematic, the organizing to deal with the matter, the resolution of the matter. The succession may be repeated numerous times one after the other, or hierarchically, that is, one within another. p.28.

The revealing thing to look for, from our point of view, is the occurrence of performancial syntagms in succession and in hierarchy. One can always move back from these, but they are the points in story where it comes together, where one sees what it is that is in confrontation at different levels, which wins, what is gained or lost.

The actors in a narrative, having been abstracted into actantial roles, are now further generalized into 'actants'; and Calloud presents his actantial scheme. We quote it extensively. When the natural and holistic character of the actor is deconstructed the relational truths which comprise it appear. (p.26.)

In the contractual syntagm two actants appear, the sender and the subject, the one mandating and the one accepting. In the performancial syntagm there appear subject, opponent and helper as the actants implicit in the functions of confrontation and domination. Sender and receiver correspond to the function of attribution. (p.28.)

The actantial scheme (or model) is the next stage in the deconstructing of the personages. It reveals the complete network of relations in which the actants mentioned in connection with the syntagm are understandable. Behind each of the actors in a narrative there is a totally constraining "locus" of definitions, a matrix (in the mathematical sense of the term) which generates the discursive objects that we

analyze. Each actantial position is defined by a group of relations to the other positions. Here is how Greimas presents it in its most general formulation: (p.29f.)

Sender -----> Object -----> Receiver  
   i  
 Helper -----> Subject<----- Opponent

It includes three axes:

The axis of communication: sender, object, receiver. Along this axis lie all the phenomena of communication, transference, transmission, deprivation, lack, asking, virtual or real reception, etc.... It is on this axis that the object receives a first definition as 'what is communicated, transmitted, missing, given back, asked for ...' Yet one should not forget that the object lies also on a second axis and that it is therefore also defined in terms of its relation to the subject.

The axis of volition: subject, object. Upon this axis are the phenomena of quest, conquest, fight in order to acquire something, taking possession of what is first presented negatively as lack. The subject is almost exclusively defined along the axis of volition. It is the axis of the project and of the plot.

The relations between subject and object and between sender and object should not be confused. The sender does not perform the communication, nor is he

characterized by the reception of the object. It may happen that, at the level of the manifestation, the subject and the receiver are manifested by the same personage. In such a case, the single personage occupies several actantial positions, each of which remains fully distinct at its own level. Thus at the actantial level the subject should not be confused with either the sender or the receiver. The subject cooperates in a decisive way in the communication, but in a subordinate way. He makes possible the transference by suppressing the obstacles which hinder communication, or by weakening the powers which had engendered deprivation.

The object, defined earlier through its relation with the sender and the receiver, is now defined further through its relation with the subject. This characteristic sometimes facilitates the identification of the object. For, indeed, it is often hidden in the manifestation. At times it is difficult to know what is communicated.

In such cases one looks for what is the aim of the quest of the subject, what the subject "wants," what is the field in which he is enabled to act.

The axis of power: helper, subject, opponent. "Power" is the second modality. One should not forget that it also serves to define the subject which occupies the central position on this axis. "Power" (or sometimes



'cognition,' i.e., "know how") is indeed needed in order to pass from "volition" to action. Thus, there is room for the modality of "power" between the project (or plot) and the actualization.

"In some narratives, power is primarily manifested through the figures of the helper and of the opponent (which are in a way independent from "power" itself) One hesitates to use the term "personage," not only because the helper and the opponent are syntactic values, but also because in many instances they are represented not by anthropomorphic beings but rather by qualities of the hero or by inanimate objects (e.g., "magical objects"). The opposing force is nothing other than the "figuration" of the "negative power" of a second subject that Greimas also calls the anti-subject. This "inverse power" provokes deprivation, maintains lack, and hinders restitution up to the time when the lack is reduced by the helper."

"In many narratives ... the actants "helper/opponent" are not manifested in figurative form. The analyst should not be misled. Any main test presupposes "power" and thus the communication in a prior qualifying test of a helper proportional to the difficulty of the main test. For, indeed, the confrontation of the two subjects (subject and anti-subject) takes place through the intermediary of "powers." This is a reminder that the personages are artificial constructs."

Calloud concludes:

With the presentation of the "actantial model" the description of the syntactical part of the analysis comes to an end. In concluding, we need to take inventory of what we have clarified and to discuss briefly some of the questions that we have left open. (p.32.)

#### The Paradigmatic Sequences

Some narratives have repeated sequences which belong not only to the syntagmatic model of the three tests, but also to a paradigmatic model: the interrelations of these sequences are of a paradigmatic type. By this we mean that the same actors have in repeated sequences the same actantial positions, or positions which vary correlatively and in an ordered way. It then becomes possible to form several series of sequences which are homologous even though they may be distant from each other and not syntagmatically related. This phenomenon has been discovered and studied by Francois Rastier in "Les niveaux d'ambigüité des structures narratives" (Semiotica III,4,1971). It is this article that one must study if the analysis of a text demands it.

#### Establishment of the Subject

... in structural analysis, any "natural effect" must be suspect. (The) construction on the basis of a system of signs and of relations must be carefully

investigated. Behind the "subject" of the process emphasized by the surface syntax, we must find what establishes him in position of subject, namely his relations to the sender, the object, the helper, and the opponent.

The relation of the subject to the sender demands further explanation. The presentation of the actantial scheme did not show the establishing of the subject. Yet a relation should be represented linking the sender with the subject for the communication of volition. One could also note that a similar relation between the two is the communication of power and eventually of cognition (that is, of the helper) from the sender to the subject. It is useful to understand why these two relations are not represented on the scheme by arrows linking the sender with the subject. It is because these are two peculiar cases of the overall communication registered on the axis sender-object-receiver. The modalities (volition, power, cognition) are objects of a communication, as any object, and the one who receives them is, first of all, a receiver. Yet, these are very special objects. Instead of maintaining the one who receives them as receiver, they establish him in a specific position (subject). This prior establishment of the subject is necessary in order to have an intermediary (the subject) which will facilitate the communication of the main object to the ultimate receiver. Thus, there is no incompatibility between the position of receiver and that of subject.

Quite to the contrary - the subject is first a receiver. He can even become it again as receiver of the object-value itself: as is the case in love stories in which, incidentally, the desired object is also sender. In fact, very commonly the subject becomes again receiver in order to receive the object-message at the end of "glorifying test." These remarks should suffice to suggest the composite nature of the personages which gather together in themselves these various position in the manifestation.

... it is around the object that this intersection of relations is found. Rarely does the text manifest this object very explicitly. Yet its place in the narrative must be determined. This is why we need to ask at the very beginning of the analysis, "what is lacked? by whom? what is communicated? what are the objects which are transmitted? what are the 'loci' of communication?"

If an object in the narrow and material sense of the term is communicated, we need to ponder what position it occupies or hides and to reconstitute the complete network of relations which lies under this "meaning effect." Here again, the "natural" should not mislead the analyst .....

Note that the "negative" objects are manifested either as attribution of a "harmful" object, or as deprivation of a "useful" object.

It is important at this stage to reconstruct the function of the "villainy" which leads to the manifestation of the lack and definition of the quest. By means of the "villainy" it is possible to locate the inverse (or negative) sender who can, at that point, act without the intermediary of his helper.

This helper of the negative sender will be the opponent of the positive subject, i.e., the hero (the negative subject being the traitor).

This negative sender is often masked, unrecognizable. Indeed, this is often one of the characteristics of any sender. He may stay in the background and consequently not be represented in the manifestation in any specific way (the society or one of its aspects occupies frequently the position of sender .....).

#### Syntactic vs. Semantic

In concluding this first part, we can now go back to an important point that we had promised to discuss further, the distinction between syntactic order and semantic order in narrativity. The semantic elements more or less mask the emptiness of the syntactic elements and their indifference toward meaning. It is to the semantic elements that we have ascribed the "meaning effects" or, better, the "content effects." These effects are produced in the manifestation by a power which progressively narrows the otherwise open syntactic "possibilities." This is to say that, at

first glance at least, there is the same opposition between syntactic and semantic as exists between "container" and "content" (their reciprocal heterogeneity and exteriority being included in this opposition). We could be tempted to think that the only value to the knowledge of the syntactic "container" would be that it would allow better identification of the content viewed as the only valid end of the analysis. Yet, we should not forget that this filling up with contents is necessarily closely interrelated with the progressive interplay of the syntactic forms. In other words, the "container" is not given a priori. It emerges in the text and its organization is the result of specific operations which belong to the syntactic process. Thus we cannot merely attribute the content effect to the crystallization of the external semantic values. Both the syntactic and the semantic orders contribute to producing the meaning effect.

This deep level is reached by the analysis at the ultimate stage of the deconstruction of personage, locations, and objects. Then the functions which had been previously identified as confrontation, domination, attribution are translated in logical terms as contradictory, contrary, affirmation, negation, implication. On this, see A.J. Greimas, "The Interactions of Semiotic Constraints," Yale French Studies, 1968.

Let us emphasize simply that at this deep level we find the ultimate and radical conversion of the functions into qualifications. Thus, narrativity would be the manifestation of an achronic and nonspatial manipulation of semantic contents which are interrelated in fundamental categories of the signification. This theory of an achronic basis of the narrativity raises numerous and difficult problems, yet it also explains quite a few phenomena (for instance, why narratives can be used in philosophical discourses). (p.44.)

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As was said earlier we will be making selective use of Calloud's tools, a procedure justified only by the insights that their use might generate.

Our primary concern is with a religions analysis, not a linguistic one, and for this purpose we will be drawing heavily upon Cumpsty's theory of religion.

#### CUMPSTY'S GENERAL THEORY OF RELIGION

Cumpsty's general theory of religion has not been readily available in one place until quite recently, but existed in a number of papers and research reports and some of it only in teaching materials of the University of Cape Town. It is now available in a publisher's draft, but not to the public.

at large. What follows and what was included earlier, therefore, is fuller than it might have been and extended quotations have been preferred to paraphrases. The material included has been limited, as far as that is consistent with intelligibility for those unfamiliar with the theory, to those parts that are necessary to our present purpose.

Cumpsty argues that any study of myth must begin by asking what religion is, for that is the primary reality. One must then ask how religious language functions for, while language is not the primary reality, a community can only possess religion conceptually. One must then ask what limits are set by religion itself to its conceptualization. Only then is one free to deal with myth.

Cumpsty may be summed up for present purposes under two sets of three key ideas.

#### A. Keys in relation to religion

- i) Religion is about BELONGING
- ii) While individual experience is primary - corporate conceptualization is important
- iii) There are only three coherent 'types' for the conceptualization of religion as belonging

#### B. Keys in relation to myth

- i) Religion is the primary fact, myth is not to be understood apart from the religious purpose that it



serves

ii) Myth is language of the UNIQUE (totality)

iii) Myth is about reality NOW

We will now expand on each of these keys :-

A.i) Religion is about BELONGING

For Cumpsty this is a datum, as he says of this paradigmatic understanding of religion "it works best or it doesn't" but he does in fact provide 'persuasives' for this starting point. They will not be included here.

Cumpsty writes :-

Religion is concerned with belonging. It is the quest for, maintenance or realization of, belonging to the ultimately-real, however that may be felt or conceived.

The ultimately-real is understood to be that to which the individual most feels the need to belong in order to give meaning to, secure, or otherwise enrich his or her existence.

Such belonging has two aspects:

a felt sense of the ultimately-real, together with a minimal conceptualization of the same

and

a mode of belonging to that ultimately-real.

The latter will vary appropriately with the former.

The felt sense of the ultimately-real is distilled from the individual's total experience. At the cognitive level, it is the answer to the other side of the life-long question "who am I", namely, "what is all-that-out-there". (p.358).

A.ii.a) While individual experience is primary - corporate conceptualization is important

In discussing Rümke's model of religious development in the individual, Cumpsty writes:

"The experiential level ... is what religion is about. Suppose that one had to consider two people. The one person .....having a very sophisticated set of words but no personal religious experience. The other person .....having what we have called direct cosmic experience but is unable to identify himself or herself as religious because he or she has never found the right set of words to conceptualize the experience. There is no doubt that one would have to say that it was the (second) person ....who was the more religious." (p.96)

Later he adds:

"Feelings are prior to symbols. One can restate Rümke's point ... and say that whereas, when people

speak of religion they are usually referring to what is here called the symbolized sense of reality, it is in fact the felt sense of reality which is basic to religion. What is made clearer in this model is the dynamic relationship between the felt sense of reality and the symbolized sense of reality. Symbols can be seen to play a part in the shaping of the felt sense of reality although very much more feeds into it. It is there that the synthesis of experience takes place and there that symbols are authenticated." (p.325)

Yet, "Corporate experience, as distinct from personal experience, can only be possessed in the categories of language and there can be no doubting the importance of such categories for any study of culture." (p.301)

We will return to the importance of corporate conceptualization when Cumpsty's coherent 'types' of tradition have been presented.

A.iii) There are only three coherent 'types' for the conceptualization of religion as belonging

Cumpsty addresses the limits set to the conceptualization of religion by the nature of religion itself, by arguing that, if religion is about belonging to an ultimately-real that is distilled from experience of all-that-out-there, then there are limits set to how the ultimately-real can be modelled:-

Possible answers to the question "what is all-that-out-there?" are not unlimited. There are only three possible paradigms for (that is three basic ways of modelling) the nature of an ultimately-real to which one would belong.

A fourth possible response, and in my view the only non-religious one, is that it is chaos, without integrity or meaning.

Whenever it is maintained that, beyond the individual, there is something on which he or she is dependent for the development and security of self-knowledge, then religion is present even though it be in an elemental form.

He presents the three paradigms for reality as follows:-

Humankind's primary response to the world-out-there, is the uncomplicated monistic one, "this is the real". However it may be modelled, as largely personal or impersonal, whether it is experienced as harmonious or conflicted, it is understood as a whole with many interacting parts. It will remain so for as long as it can be affirmed as that to which one would belong, or if it cannot be affirmed, then so long as no other possibility is envisaged or believed in.

If total experience cannot be affirmed as experience of the real (in the sense of being that to which one would

belong) and if the alternative model can be envisaged, the quest for belonging will lead to a splitting of experience, that is, to the conceptual separating out of that which can be wholly affirmed, from that which cannot. I will refer to this conceptual split as a bifurcation. The modelling of this bifurcation can take two forms. It can be modelled as a divide between reality and its appearance or as a divide within reality itself.

In the first form, the reason the immediate world-out-there cannot be affirmed, is understood to lie in the individual's perception. It cannot be related to as the real, because it is not apprehended, either cognitively or affectively, as it is in itself. In this model reality remains monistic.

In the second form, the bifurcation lies in reality itself. There is a now and a not-yet, a this and a that which transcends it, a real and an ultimately-real. This dichotomy in reality, modelled temporally and spatially, is expected to be overcome when this and the above come together and reality is experienced in its fullness.

Thus there are three paradigms for reality. The latter two begin with a bifurcation built in, that is, they begin with the expectation of an unacceptable experience. The first paradigm begins without such an expectation, and therefore every experience that is

potentially unacceptable must be dealt with ad hoc if it is not to threaten the model of reality." (p.359).

From a consideration of these 'paradigms' for reality Cumpsty develops three coherent 'types' of religious tradition. He summarizes them as follows:-

These three paradigms for reality

"... give rise to some necessary, that is non-negotiable, consequential symbols, including a mode of belonging, and .. these give rise to more flexible sets of possible symbols. Each of these three sets of symbols comprise an ideal type of religion." They have been .. " labelled, to reflect the way adherents understand and engage with their immediate world of experience, as nature religion, religion of withdrawal, and secular world affirming religion."

#### Nature Religion

In the first ideal type immediate experience is monistic and real. Therefore the environment or significant parts of it are dealt with as divine and eternal or (if those personal and philosophical concepts are not present) as a given without a beginning and without a destiny and, beyond certain limits, not to be interfered with by humankind. (p.232)

### Withdrawal Religion

In the second ideal type, the immediate environment is regarded as real but deceptive. The adherent, therefore, seeks to withdraw from it (withdraw in terms of both physical involvement and affective attachment) seeking instead the reality that lies behind the appearance. Reality remains monistic, so that it can be sought in the depth of one's own being, or by seeking to peel away the structures imposed upon the way humans see or feel about experience as a whole. (p.239)

### Secular World Affirming Religion

The third ideal type affirms the environment as real but secular. The divine is transcendent, that is, something wholly other than the immediate world of sense experience. Evidence of the divine may be discerned in and through the environment but the environment is not divine. (p.242)

These paradigms provide ideal types and no existing religion may fit without remainder into any of them, yet because they are mutually exclusive they provide an adequate permanent frame in which the ever-shifting traditions can be located.

Cumpsty develops these types in great detail and this will be referred to in the course of the analysis as and when necessary. His table of the three types is included on the adjacent page for quick reference.

In discussion of how and why different peoples have opted for the different paradigms, Cumpsty maintains that it is people undergoing geographical or cultural migration who have opted for the Secular World Affirming paradigm. This, he argues, is because the most important feature of time ceases to be its life cycles and becomes the point in the future when the 'goal' will be achieved.

Why a particular paradigm is chosen, or comes to dominance within a culture, may be accidental but there seems to be some evidence for predisposing conditions. For example, in relation to the events of Biblical history leading up to the Sinai covenant, the condition which pressed the group toward choosing the bifurcation in reality itself was a socio-cultural disturbance which lead to geographic migration, and thence to a sense of a lost past and of a future hope.

When the important thing about time becomes some future event, rather than natural cycles, people put their god where their hope is. Because this ultimately real already exists, it is also modelled as above. The expectation is for this and that which transcends it, to come together at that future point in time. (p.362)

It is change, not scale, that leads to transcendence. People place their god where their hope is, that is, in the future, even if it is expressed as a recovered past. The need for a more cosmic sense need only lead to monism. Monotheism is dualistic as to reality, not monistic. The two must be carefully distinguished. (p.468)



NON-NEGOTIABLE SYMBOLS AND FEATURES		NATURE RELIGION	WITHDRAWAL RELIGION	SECULAR WORLD AFFIRMING RELIGION
EXPERIENCE OF IMMEDIATE WORLD OUT THERE	is	AFFIRMED AS OF THE REAL	NOT AFFIRMED AS OF THE REAL	AFFIRMED AS OF THE REAL BUT NOT ULTIMATE
REALITY	is	MONISTIC	MONISTIC	DUALISTIC
CHANCE AND DETERMINISM		CHANCE EXCLUDED	CHANCE EXCLUDED	CHANCE, new beginnings
BELONGING to ultimately real	is	ASSUMED must be maintained or repaired	ASSUMED needs to be realized individually	to be SOUGHT individually
NATURE OF ULTIMATELY REAL	is	without rigid distinction between personal and impersonal		PERSONAL
TIME	is	CYCLICAL biological, maybe astral	CYCLICAL rhythmic aeons	LINEAR
TEST OF QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE	is	TEXTURE	TEXTURE	GOALS
GROUND OF MEANING OF EXISTENCE	is	GRAND DESIGN (pattern)	GRANDEUR	GRAND DESIGN (purpose)
MODE OF ENGAGEMENT with world out there	is	FIT INTO	WITHDRAW FROM	TAKE HOLD AND SHAPE
SOCIAL FEATURES				
1 INDIVIDUAL or COMMUNAL		COMMUNAL centred	INDIVIDUAL universal	COMMUNAL solidary
2 SOCIAL COHESION		BEHAVIOUR PATTERN	BEHAVIOUR PATTERN	BELIEF PATTERN
3 SOCIAL COERCION		"LOVE" "FEAR"	n/a	"LOVE" "GREED"
SOURCE OF ETHICS	is	HARMONY, & INDIVIDUAL PURPOSE	REALIZATION, & ONENESS	THE END, & THE ABOVE
THE MODELLING OF SURVIVAL		ANCESTOR	REINCARNATION	TO HEAVEN
RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE	is	WISDOM	DISCOVERY OF A PATH	REVELATION

A.ii.b) Having considered Cumpsty's coherent "types" of religious tradition, we can now return to corporate conceptualization and consider those complex communities where the tradition is offered on different levels and in which more than one tradition may be on offer.

Cumpsty distinguishes what he calls the three faces of corporate religion: the Religious Institution, defined in public terms; Aggregations Significant in Identity, defined within the individual concerned; the Tradition Community, defined by the processes going on within it.

For our purposes tradition community is the important concept.

Tradition community relates most closely to what is generally spoken of as an -ism, for example, Judaism, Methodism, Jainism, but it is not easy to say precisely what these are. (p.745)

A tradition community, while consisting at any point in time in its contemporary members, is best delimited by the processes going on within it, the processes that link the contemporary members, in their real life context, with their ongoing tradition. (p.746)

Even these processes may change their form, but they cannot change their essential function if the community is to survive. (p.789)

Cumpsty calls the two pairs of processes Incarnation and Distillation, and Bridging and Cleansing. He deals with the former pair first.

Within every dynamic tradition there is a double process that moves between the poles of contextualization and universalization. I will call this Incarnation and Distillation. (p.790)

... a tradition needs to be incarnated in a real flesh and blood context and in the end in an individual existence, before it can be used, tested and refined in life. Only there can it grow in the pasture of experience.

If it were left like that however, growth in every community and indeed in every individual would be growth apart.

In a tradition community it is not left like that. In a tradition community there is some form of centre, something with which each concrete situation is in dialogue, ensuring that its experience is not lost and its interpretation is not divisive, but that its universal essence is distilled in the language of the centre and integrated with all that has existed before. This is the other side of the double process. This is distillation. (p.792)

Distillation enriches the content of the tradition and develops its creative power in human existence. Incarnation makes it relevant. (p.793)

The

two processes of gathering and redistributing the community's experience of the tradition in context, must always be present, for they delimit the tradition community. Where they do not exist there is no potential for continuity and while there might be an abstracted tradition and even a community, there is no tradition community. (p.749)

Cumpsty then discusses the symbolic and functional centre that is necessary to ensure that these processes take place.

Distillation must take place around some sort of a centre and this universalizing centre needs to be seen as having authority. (p.795)

The centre of a tradition community can take many forms, but a centre there must be, if the tradition is not to lose its creative power or its relevance. This centre may take the very fixed form of founding documents and texts derived from succeeding moments of recrystallization. ... It may be as flexible as that supposed ability of a common mind to know what is right, which is found in the Common Law tradition. In the last case, it will be the developing tradition itself which is the centre with which the concrete peripheral situations must maintain a dialogue. The functioning of this sort of centre is facilitated by an agreed process for determining what the tradition is at any point in time, including, in this case, law reports, precedents and the jury system. (p.795)

A centre needs to be both symbolic and functional, Rome is the focus for both in the Catholic tradition. (p.797)

In the protestant world, before the need for a more deliberate ecumenism was felt, an understanding of the nature and role of the Bible served as the centre and still does for many. This understanding, which is mutatis mutandis, that of the Jew to the Law of Moses, the Muslim to the Q'ran and the United States Supreme Court to the Constitution, is that all that is necessary for salvation is contained in the revered document, out of which new light and truth will continue to break as humankind in its concrete situation submits to its authority and enters into dialogue with it. (p.797)

Cumpsty then looks at the ways in which communities deal with mixed traditions. Containment and bridging are the more important ones from our point of view.

I have assumed until now that the tradition community works within a single dominant paradigm, but tradition communities are not usually so well defined, or so simple. They can embrace a mix of paradigms, or a single paradigm tradition can, under pressure, reach out toward one of the others. Beyond simply living with it, there are three ways of coping with such divergence, I will speak of them as containment, as allocation and as bridging. (p.800)

Containment is the encapsulation of intruding elements of an alien world, which would otherwise threaten a community's sense of reality, within symbolic and ritual sub-sets of its own tradition." (p.801)

He says that containment is an appropriate ploy at low levels of disturbance and if the amount of foreign symbolic material admitted to the system is small. If it is a more substantial then allocation or bridging would be called for.

All established traditions will have methods for the containment of the sort of lower level threats to world-view that are frequently experienced.

Containment can take different forms according to the perceived permanence, benefits and scale, of the elements that would otherwise threaten the world view. This is best illustrated by reference to a particular situation.

In Southern Africa, as elsewhere, the individualism of the urban industrial situation has been both a continuing lure and a threat to traditional rural communities. When the advantage, even necessity, of being involved in the industrial sphere has been recognized, an individual's choice to be so involved can no longer be treated as deviant behaviour. It may still be possible to see it as undesirable and to hope that it will be temporary. It might then be contained within the sub-set of symbolic understanding and ritual behaviour associated with war. Dangerous, necessary and

hopefully ad hoc. Calling for strengthening and protection beforehand, purification and rejoicing when a warrior returns, hopefully with spoils.

If involvement is seen as longer term and of continuing benefit, then it might be included in the symbol and ritual sub-set associated with the hunt, even the long duration elephant hunt, should these be available in the experience of the community. In certain areas and frequently associated with river travel, there are possible sub-sets associated with trading journeys. All these are dangerous aspects of life, but permanently undertaken and advantageous. For a pastoral community, without such experiences, war might have to remain the containing sub-set, but now transformed into a more permanent militarism. Now, many or all of the young men will be expected to participate. To become a hunter, a journeying trader, a warrior, could now be treated as a rite of passage, a step beyond that of becoming an adult.

When many have experienced the urban industrial world and perhaps also education at the hands of those with the city's world-view, the scale of the problem is enlarged. Now there needs to be symbolic and ritual spaces where involvement in that individualistic world is legitimated in its own right, rather than as hunting or trading. One needs a "plug-in module" from that other world (or one that will serve the same purpose) legitimating individual initiative, but in such a way

that the overall communal world view is not threatened. It might be a call for individual effort to speed the coming of a not too distant Kingdom or a Classless Society, but in some way it would have to be the restoration of true community." (p.802)

... In this situation the emphasis would not ... be world rejection, but containment of a linear time, goal oriented module within an immediate experience affirming, communal world-view and ritual. (p.804)

When the "plugged-in modules" begin to flow together, that is, when the scale of influence of the incoming culture enlarges to the point where there are really two world-views in competition with each other, then the need is for allocation, or more likely, for bridging. (p.804)

Allocation is one of two processes that may take place when two or more traditions exist side by side in the same community. ... all sub-groups may in time come to accept substantial elements of each tradition. These elements may coexist in an uneasy tension, or they may somehow be allocated to their own life space. .... For example, one tradition may come to serve the need to belong to the wider community, while another serves the needs of family and local community. Another may serve the needs of production and other forms of work. .... Integration beyond that of allocation appears to be unnecessary in a non-linear world view, since there is a presumption of unity in the background. In a goal



oriented community, however, competing traditions need to be held together, or they may tear their adherents apart. The more goal oriented and dynamic a community is, the less will allocation serve to hold together diverse traditions. If individual and corporate identity is to be possible, if life-worlds are to feel coherent and community values to be reasonably integratable, ways must be found to bridge the competing logical systems. (p.804)

Bridging and Cleansing, is a process that must go on in any community with mixed paradigms (which most are) and perhaps also in communities where experience within a paradigm is unacceptable and a reaching outward has begun. (p.790)

In all dynamic situations where traditions of different types or sub-types exist together, the development of bridging myths, or alternatively the embracing of bridging symbols, becomes the appropriate means of integration.

If a relatively integrated tradition includes elements from more than one paradigmatic type then it will also include this additional type of symbol.

Without bridging there can be no individual sense of belonging and no reasonably common communal mind concerning the values to be reflected in whatever structures it seeks to establish.

Such mixed traditions, while not providing the most secure sense of belonging, may have what has been

called transformative capacities to a greater degree, for they are essentially less stable and already have resources for coping with divergence.

Where two traditions exist together on a more or less permanent basis, what I have called bridging symbols will themselves become elaborated and integrated into what might be called a bridging tradition. (p.808)

Bridging symbol can take many different forms. It can be some story that is quite independent of the traditions that are competing and strongly integrated in itself, so that elements of old and incoming traditions are firmly woven together. Bridging symbol can also be a vaguely defined mystical or historical entity such as Ethiopia or Presta John, linking Christianity and the Black experience. It can be a charismatic individual, present or past, linked in some way to the adherents and to both traditions ... It can, in the short term anyway, be some powerful emotional or habitually established ritual or ritual figure, or even a powerful argument (e.g. theodicy) directed to the affective linking of elements that do not logically belong together. It can be a symbol taken from one tradition and reinterpreted to conform to the other.

... Cleansing means discarding ... those bridging symbols that no longer function for that purpose and therefore do not seem to belong, perhaps in retrospect may seem never to have belonged, to the tradition.

It is important to be aware that, in the last resort, bridging is logically impossible and that a clear logic of belonging and a fully coherent ethic, are only possible within a single paradigm. Thus bridging is always logically deceptive and it can, without appearing to do so, destroy important elements in a tradition. (p.814)

Bridging, as it has been presented, supposes strong traditions rooted in two or more paradigms within the same community. It does not, however, have to be quite like that.

It may begin as a reaching out from within a single tradition that has been firmly entrenched in a single paradigm, but where something is felt to be missing or where life experience is unacceptable.

In a situation where the existing dominant paradigm, or paradigms, no longer feel real, and where the experience of the community puts it under the sort of pressure that would move it towards another paradigm if the community were familiar with that paradigm, then bridging may take place. In this case, however, it will not be bridging between two known paradigms, but rather an outreach from the existing tradition toward a model of reality that is as yet unknown.

In situations of this type, there would normally be an intense threshing around for a way to deal with the

unacceptable quality of life and the resulting picture would be complex. (p.819)

B.i) Religion is the primary fact, myth is not to be understood apart from the religious purpose that it serves.

In discussing other approaches to the study of myth, especially that of Structuralists, Cumpsty argues that it cannot be legitimately separated from the study of religion:-

Myth, of course, may be narrative and be analysed as such. There can be no problem with that. The question is whether myth can be analysed as myth. To do a structural analysis of myth per se, without first saying what myth is, means that myth is understood to be self-defined and presumably by its structural form. I, on the other hand, understand myth to be a tool of religion and therefore to be defined by its function in relation to religion. Religion is the primary fact, not myth. (p.306)

B.ii) Myth is language of the UNIQUE (totality)

Cumpsty argues that if religion is concerned with belonging to an ultimately-real distilled from total experience, then primary religious discourse must be in a mode that enables one to speak of the unique. Language that functions by relating one thing to another in a public frame of reference will not do:-

I now come to what is the heart and core of myth and therefore of communication in religion.....We develop a sense of what is real from our total experience, and therefore, with the involvement of all our senses. We exclude things from reality, as being hallucination or illusion, when they do not fit that wider reality. ....Therefore I maintained that religious experience, the experience itself, does not have to be different from any other experience. The difference lies in the way that we have to speak about it. We do not have two realms of experience but two realms of discourse.  
(p.170)

There is the literal realm that functions by relating one thing to another in an agreed frame of reference, and the symbolic, what Cumpsty speaks of as feeling language or myth. He quotes Martin Buber on the latter -

"the thou ... is no thing among things nor does he consist of things. He is no longer He or She, limited by other He's or She's, a dot in the world grid of space and time, nor a condition that can be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. Neighbourless and seamless he is You and fills the firmament." (p.171)

The decision to treat a person as person Cumpsty says :-

is the decision to treat the person as unique, as a unique totality. As Buber put it, he or she is "neighbourless and seamless". If I am to treat the

person who confronts me as unique then I cannot either relate them to another of their kind nor relate their parts. Relating language is excluded. A unique totality cannot be related without denying its uniqueness. All that remains, if one would speak of the experience of a unique relationship, is the language of feeling. One can speak of what it feels like to be confronted by the other. (p.174)

Both realms of discourse are necessary and have their appropriate function. ... I must emphasize their independence,....there is no logic by which we can pass from one to the other. One cannot demythologize a myth, that is express its meaning in literal language. One can only remythologize it, that is express its meaning in other symbols. When a myth seems to be demythologized it is because universal and somewhat remote symbols are replaced by a number of much more immediate and familiar ones, symbols that one does not think of as symbols at all. (p.176)

There is one, and I think only one, situation in which experience is necessarily unique, and simply cannot be related to in the I-it mode or spoken of in literal language. This is where one is attempting to arrive at some understanding of the nature and significance of the totality of one's experience, for that is necessarily unique. (p.177)

... if it can be accepted that religion is primarily concerned with relationship with an ultimately-real,

and that the conviction concerning the ultimately-real arises out of the totality of one's experience, then there is no way of relating it to anything else in its class. One knows no other totality of experience. All-that-out-there is solitary, there is no other, and what one may come to know of another's experience of it, has already become a part of one's own. (p.181)

In summary he says:-

Myth is the verbal and necessarily affective mode of discourse for the conceptualization and communication of the felt sense of reality. (p.510)

B.iii) Myth is about reality NOW

Overagainst those who think of myth as wishful thinking and those who emphasize it's images of a primal-time, Cumpsty argues that, if it describes the reality a person belongs to, it is about now:-

I wish to re-emphasize that if religion is concerned with belonging, then myth, as the mode of discourse for the communication of the felt nature of the ultimately-real, must be seeking to express what reality is felt to be right now. That is, it must express that to which I would be related, as my continuing experience of it

is now. Not as I once felt it to be or hope that it will be in the future, but as I know it to be now.  
(p.510)

Some Consequences Arising from these Key Ideas for the Study of Myth.

Having discussed the four sources of similarity in myth and symbol in every age and place, namely, profound experience, what is universal in the structures of human thought and communication, the limits set to modelling reality, and the nature of the reality experienced, Cumpsty proposes the following as the appropriate approach to the study of myth, we quote it in full:

One consequence of the understanding of religion employed ... this book is that, at its most general level, the scientific study of religion will be concerned with:

how the individual-in-community and at a given point in time experiences and models reality, organizes to realize or secure his or her belonging to that reality

and

how this experience, modelling and organization, change as the external circumstances change.



This in turn means that the student's interest in a body of myth does not lie with where its various elements were appropriated from, or the paths they traveled, but with why a particular myth is or was important to a particular people at a particular point in time.

When we look at myth we will be interested in:

the narrative -

what profound experiences natural and historical does it reflect.

which of these are universal, or near universal, and which are specifically local.

For this we need to know about the natural context and the history of the people whose myth it is and, if possible, the history of the development of the symbols within the myth.

the structure -

within what logical type or types does the myth model reality and, if it is indeed types, what attempts at bridging the types are present.

is there normative narrative structure present and if

so, to what extent is it complete; has it been modified.

are there structures present which represent attempts within the type or types to maintain the world-view; to explain (defuse), contain or reconcile contradictions in experience.

what structures of experienced reality does the myth reflect, do these accord with what is known of the people's experience seen through their eyes.

The student of religion is not concerned primarily with classifications of myth based on profound experiences which might be supposed to be universal or near universal, nor with regularities in human thought or communication processes, but with all that a particular people experience, which is rooted in their own context of experience and processed by (selection and valuation) filters shaped by factors in their own historical experience. This can only be arrived at by knowing the history and the mythology of the community concerned, and how the latter (the mythology) is employed and functions in context.

There will be two levels to this functioning:

a conscious level, that is, what people think the myth means, says to them, or does for them

and

an unconscious level, which will include the

structure of reality that has become reflected in the myth.

I need say no more about the first level.

In regard to the second level, we need to ask not only what is the structure of reality presented by the myth, but also if the structure presented could be one generated by the context of experience, given that it is experienced through the spectacles of the existing model of reality. That is, whether it is living myth rather than old myth of the community (or indeed of another community) that is retained only as entertaining story.

To know that, and to get to the structure that is our concern, it is necessary to escape the overlay of structures imposed by more universal factors and to deal only with responses to differences in what is experienced in the particular context. We must not be in the position of taking things that are a universal feature of being human and drawing local conclusions from them, when there are in fact no locally specific contributing factors. Equally we must not let our awareness of universal features mask local factors that would influence myth formation and modification in a similar direction.

For what I called profound experiences, it might seem that while the attainment of this stripping away could require some effort, it did not pose a conceptual

problem. But things are not as simple as that. ... what is believed modifies what is experienced and vice versa. They are in dynamic relationship. If we ask, for example, what makes profound experience profound, the answer would have to include what is already believed about the nature of reality.

When we seek to separate out those structures that lie in human thought and communication there is an additional problem. The trouble is that the student is also human and therefore also functions within those categories and processes of thought. One of the most difficult things for human beings to attempt is to think about their own thinking. One could never know when the understanding of the processes was complete.

Because of the difficulties involved, it is probably best for the student of religion, as distinct from those whose primary concern is human thought processes, to begin with the expectations of the model developed in this chapter. That is, that there is a self-contained causal nexus comprised by the actual context of experience, myth, and experience actually had in the context, each in dynamic relationship with the other, and to look for all explanations there.

Nevertheless, different approaches are not mutually exclusive and through the efforts of anthropologists, philosophers and those concerned with artificial intelligence, some universal factors in human thinking have emerged and will go on emerging. Insofar as these

things are understood, they need to be taken into account by the student of religion interested in myth.

Certainly the work of the structuralists cannot be neglected, although, as I indicated, the work on narrative is more central to our purpose than that on myth itself.

... Knowledge of reality is basic to the religious quest and there seems to be no reason why one cannot have confidence that the nature of what-is-out-there does (in the long run) shape human expectations of it, to the point where it can be experienced as it is in itself to a significant degree. Science of religion assists in this quest insofar as it is able to separate out similarities in myth that should be attributed to other sources and leave exposed that which results from humanity's attempt to express its experience of the real in every age and clime. (p.319ff)

Finally, there is a section of Cumpsty's theoretical presentation that we will wish to draw upon that does not fit within one of our keys. While presenting a further breakdown of Nature Religion, Cumpsty adds to the above considerations, questions about the perspective in which the world-out-there is being viewed and therefore about the language being used to speak of it. This indicates something about the level and nature of the existing threat to the world-view. Because this is also central to our concerns it is quoted extensively.

There are "Three Possible Perspectives On The World-out-there

### 1. Actual Life-world Perspective

This is the perspective in which each aspect of everyday existence is perceived as it exists in itself and in interaction with neighbours. That is, without overt symbolic implications and without relationship to postulated entities or to the totality of things. This perspective exists in every culture although in some it may be heavily overlaid by perspective '3'.

### 2. Total Perspective

This is the perspective in which one might stand back from all the bits and pieces of life and seek to know what all-that-out-there feels like and, perhaps, to ask "what is it all about?". ... This total perspective is always immediately available as an alternative perspective to the previous one, although individuals may not always be conscious of it.

### 3. Symbolized Life-world Perspective

This is the perspective in which significant aspects of the life-world are separated out and then given a symbolic content or relationship. This enables them to be reintegrated at a level beyond that of their actually experienced relationships. The different aspects may be personified, or given the characters and whims of

beasts, or they may be conceived as vital forces that are neither personal nor impersonal.

The locus and role of each of these three perspectives will emerge as I explore the development of varieties within the type. Each perspective has its characteristic style of language.

#### Nature Religion in Ideal Context

Structure is absolutely essential in a world-view where goals are not available for identity formation. In an experience that is relatively stable and acceptable, the need for belonging can be satisfied by participation in the structures of everyday life. These structures do not need to be overtly religious and, in a world with just sufficient struggle to impose them, they can be quite natural structures and thus, to a considerable degree, unconscious. Then identity, which may itself be largely unconscious until the individual is called upon to respond to novel situations, is established in terms of the existing natural and social orders.

If the struggle for individual and corporate survival is not strong enough to impose survival-related structures upon everyday life, then structures may have to be invented. The entities to which they relate must, of course, be real, but the relations to them, and between them, can become highly elaborated for no other reason than to structure the life-world. For example,

the sexes may be clearly separated and then the interaction between them prescribed in great detail; also who can do what, where and when, may be prescribed in relation to the village, the savannah and the forest, to animals, crops and crafts. What is generated is a mass of strongly sanctioned taboos (which to the outsider appear as a mixture of superstitions and manners) which serve no other obvious purpose than to provide and maintain the necessary structure where this has not been sufficiently generated by other pressing concerns.

What all these situations have in common is that members of the culture can remain within perspective '1' and their language remain literal. Only in the case of the "invented" structures and where the sanctions go beyond those imposed by the community itself, need there be an appeal to a symbolic world and even then it does not have to be conceptualized in detail. For many in the Western world an unspelled-out but omnipresent 'other dimension' is sufficient to invest superstitions with authority. So it is with sanctions for "invented" structures.

This possibility (of an exclusive use of literal discourse) may seem to be in contradiction to my earlier statement that myth is the mode in which one speaks of that to which one would belong. This is not really the case however. One does not belong to bits and pieces, but to a whole. In this situation the life-



world would always have unquestioned edges and while the literal discourse spoke of the bits and pieces in focus, not of the penumbra beyond, the discourse would necessarily represent the whole.

In such an acceptable situation there is no need to manipulate any particular aspects of the life-world, so the very activity of speaking literally can fulfil the function of myth, just as secular leaders can be the religious leaders, and religious ritual need not be different from ordinary life activities and not even consciously religious. There is, of course, no need for divinities or a high god.

Myth in this situation is likely to be weak in the sense that:

- there will be little of it
- belief in it, as opposed to conformity with the group's behaviour pattern, will not be an important criterion for membership in the community
- it will not necessarily be very coherent in itself because each myth refers to aspects of existence in the ordinary life-world and these have a felt coherence of their own.

The situation that I have been describing is indeed idyllic. Like a traditional view of heaven, it presupposes stability and a minimum of struggle. Thus, inter alia, an adequate and reliable gathering and hunting culture is the ideal norm for this type of

tradition and perhaps the only one in which an approach to what I have just been describing could exist. However, the ideal is not available (there is always death and decay) and nature is frequently at its most destructive precisely in those places where it is also the most prolific provider. For it to exist in actuality would suppose not only an existing stable and acceptable situation, but also that it had never been otherwise, or at least, that there had been a continuous history of acceptability for an extended period of time.

Nevertheless, there do exist situations where life is so ordered that its structures, "invented" or natural, can be taken for granted to the degree that, if the sense of belonging is challenged, the sense of structure is not sufficient to maintain it. Then it becomes necessary to refresh the sense of structure, perhaps by deliberately stepping outside of the structures for a moment. At a less dramatic level, it may be felt necessary to test the health of one's belongingness.

#### Nature Religion in Probable Contexts

##### - Moves to Maintain the Unity of Experience

Probable contexts lie on a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum lies the situation that I have just described and which is religiously stable. At the other end lies

the situation in which the immediate life-world is affirmed as the real, but in which it is experienced as highly unacceptable. This is an unstable situation and moves may be made toward a bifurcation of experience into that which can be affirmed and that which cannot. That is, toward a move out of the immediate experience affirming paradigm. These are the extremes. The rest of the spectrum may be filled in by considering responses to increasing unacceptability.

The unacceptability of experience which threatens the paradigm and therefore the sense of belonging can be either acute or chronic. I will deal with the acute form first.

#### Likely Responses to Acute Unacceptability of Experience

It is particularly in the acute situation, in which there is no time for segmental and preferred adaptations in the face of meaning threatening experiences, that a move to an increased consciousness of the total perspective described under '2' above is likely. The unitive perspective is always an available alternative to the immediate and discrete one. If experience suddenly ceases to be coherent and ceases to support its being affirmed as the real, then the likelihood of standing back and asking, "what is the nature of all-that-out-there?", is great. This is not yet a cognitive question. It is the attempt to get the

present unacceptability into a more holistic and therefore more real perspective and, hopefully, to come out with the feeling that experience as a whole can still be affirmed as the real.

Language will also change. Literal discourse will not serve to express consciousness of, never mind feelings about, the totality. As a minimum aid to consciousness of totality the ultimately real may be named. Feelings about it are likely to be expressed in art forms and in narrative myths.

This standing back and becoming conscious of the totality may itself suffice to preserve the sense of belonging. If it does not suffice then the belonging of cognitive human beings will require the support of a cognitive grasp on reality. That is, belonging will need to be modelled, where previously it had simply been accepted.

The modelling of belonging requires as a first step, a cognitive frame in which reality is held together, In this case one or more aspects of the actual structure of experience will provide the cognitive frame for all of experience. That is, there will be a symbolic frame participating in that which is to be symbolized.

These things, however, take time to develop and are therefore unlikely as responses to acute forms of unacceptable experience.

It is this constantly available possibility of moving into a total perspective that renders correct, both those who say that Africans always had a high god and those who say that they learnt it from Christian and Moslem sources.

It is hardly possible that there could be a society which has not experienced an acute disturbance, such that people have stood back for a moment and establish a total perspective. This is why one finds awareness of an ultimate power even in those societies that have been least disturbed and in which ritual relation to the immediate, probably including the immediate ancestors, usually suffices to maintain the sense of belonging.

On the other hand, the nature of the totality as transcendent is not appropriate and its nature as personal is optional, so long as societies remain in the immediate experience affirming paradigm.

If one would relate to this whole, manipulate it and certainly address it, then it will tend to be conceptualized as personal. This question, personal or not, requires further comment, because it relates to transcendence and is the real test of which paradigm is in operation.

#### The Real as Personal and Non-Personal

When I discussed the nature of religious discourse I

argued that a total perspective is necessarily unique. It is easily assimilated, therefore, to that more familiar personal relationship in which the other must be treated as unique if his or her personal quality is not to be lost. That is to say, because human beings are familiar with personal relationships, unique entities in other relationships tend to have a personal feel to them. Thus if people move into perspective '2' they will have a tendency to speak of the whole in personal terms. This means that one must get behind the language, to the structure of the reality being expressed, if an experience being described in personal terms is to be fully understood.

When I discussed secular world affirming religion I noted that the ultimately-real had to be modelled as personal because, the transcendence gap intervening, its relation to the real could no longer be modelled as mechanistic and the only familiar alternative was a volitional relation.

When the ultimately-real becomes the focus and prime exemplar of the personal and the real is understood as its creation, the personal becomes highly valued and sharply distinguished from the impersonal. The impersonal may then, particularly by comparison with the monistic traditions, appear to be under-valued.

In the type of religious tradition that we are now considering there is no pressure to think of the

ultimately-real as personal and, therefore, not the same pressure, as in the secular world affirming traditions, to make a radical distinction between personal and impersonal. The real is neither strongly personal nor strongly impersonal. It may be modelled in either way and then easily pass over into the other and back again. Equally, it may be modelled as a vital force, perhaps more manifest in ancestors and chiefs than in ordinary folk and in some descending degree in animals, plants, rivers, the earth and stones, but nevertheless as being the essential presence in all of them. It is this understanding that makes African writers protest that, however much imagery may be drawn from aspects of life, in order to speak of reality itself, Africans are not animists.

If one would speak of reality, symbols have to be drawn from somewhere and whether they are real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, from the human realm or the animal, may be almost accidental.

The really significant factor is whether volition is necessary in conceptualizing the relation of the powers-that-be to the rest of experience. This may be tested by asking whether chance really plays any part in the system and whether there is the possibility of new beginnings, or whether, in spite of personal language, the powers are controllable if one has the knowledge and one's rituals are properly performed. If the cause and effect nexus is closed, if karma

dominates, whatever the language, there is no transcendence and the powers are not in any serious sense personal. If, on the other hand, the ultimately-real is predictable only on the basis of its known character and only when it is acting within that character, then transcendence is present and, however inanimate the language, it is best understood as personal. It will be appreciated that there is the possibility of carry over here and that if, for whatever reason, personal language is used of the real it would tend to inculcate a sense of chance.

... one needs to look very closely at the expectations associated with ritual action to discover if transcendence is really present. One must ask whether the significant criterion of volition would have, of necessity, to be included in any accurate modelling of the reality to which the ritual relates. If so, transcendence is present. If volition is not a necessary ingredient of the reality related to, transcendence is not present.

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#### Likely Responses to Chronic Unacceptability of Experience

I have not wished to suggest that the only possible response to acute unacceptability is the move to a total perspective, rather that, given the lack of time for adjustment, it is a likely move. In fact a



beginning may be made upon any of the moves which are about to be discussed as possible responses to chronic unacceptability.

The situation at the acceptable end of the spectrum described above may be summarized as follows:

belonging being assumed, the need to belong can be met by an almost purely affective and largely unconscious grasp on all-that-out-there, that is, by a general sense of order and permanence in the background which is established and maintained by the rhythms of the natural order.

As one moves up the spectrum toward major unacceptability (beyond the move to a total perspective and the minimum cognitive support given by naming and expressing one's feelings about the whole) there will be moves to disarm the disintegrative effects, that is, to modify the unacceptable and to integrate that which cannot be modified.

Integration may be attempted by categorizing and accepting, as, for example, when a high infant mortality rate is dealt with by inventing a category of "those born to die".

Clearly, appropriate ritual helps to overcome felt fragmentation and as this becomes more necessary, ritual will become more distinctive and less the

everyday activities of the ordinary life-world.

At this stage the mode of belonging will also need appropriate special devices specifically to give cognitive support to its maintenance or restoration.

Earlier I had reason to contrast the experience of unity that one is not so likely to have when viewing a bowl of porridge with that which one is quite likely to have when looking into the back of a watch. I wish to recapture that imagery for a moment.

What I have been saying about acute unacceptability, might be likened to coming across a lump in the porridge which triggers a standing back to consider the quality of the porridge as a whole, which may in fact prove to be relatively uniform and acceptable. If, however, an acceptable verdict on experience cannot be delivered simply by moving from the particular to the general, then one must seek to divide, distinguish and interrelate, both the threatening and compensatory aspects, so that a sense of unity, more like that generated by viewing the mechanism of a watch, may emerge. One has then moved into the third perspective identified above.

The motivation for this breaking down and interrelating, will certainly include the desire to better know and so manipulate the parts. However, what happens in the extreme cases, when manipulation fails

yet support for the system remains or increases, suggests that the maintenance of a meaningful unity (in that to which one would belong) is the paramount concern.

The desire to control may or may not give rise to a personification of the aspects, but if it does it will also open the door to a tendency to move away from a closed system in which belonging can be assumed, toward a situation in which it must be realized or established.

These processes take time, and they serve their purpose best if they are a corporate activity. They are, therefore, only appropriate in the chronic situation. It is in this sort of situation and in order to prevent the logic of belonging fracturing, that the volume of myth increases and greater integration emerges among the myths that already exist.

I return to a longer version of an opinion referred to above: ( G J Afolabi Ojo, Yoruba Culture - A geographical analysis, (London, University of Ife and University of London Press, 1966), p.183.)

"...multiplicity is a logical consequence of their (the Yoruba's) keen recognition of the numerous elements in their physical and biological environment, their awareness of the associated problems and their determination to solve the problems in the ways they know best, using the environment to counter its own

problems most of the time. Both their polytheism and their anthropomorphism found a basis in the profusion and variety of the geographic environment. In spite of its derivation from these concrete objects Yoruba religion is not animistic."

This quotation refers to a situation which might be said to be chronically acute, a prolific environment that promises much and disappoints in the same degree. Its myth and its ritual, reflect this luxuriousness.

Not every culture of this type has become as elaborate in its quest to maintain the unity of experience as that of the Yoruba, but Afolabi Ojo's statement is an excellent summary of what I have in mind when I refer to the overlay (even domination) of the first by the third perspective. This third perspective is a symbolized life-world, in which significant aspects are understood to be controlled by other aspects and the closed system of cause and effect is conceptually maintained despite conflicts in experience." (p.516)

With these tools in hand we now move on to a second level analysis of the Tjakova cycle.

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<sup>1</sup> Levi-Strauss, The Structural Study of Myth, in Structural Anthropology, (New York, Basic Books, 1963) but see Mary Douglas' comment in Edmund Leach (ed) The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism, (London, Tavistock, 1967) p.50

## CHAPTER 8

### SECOND LEVEL ANALYSIS

In the nature of the case this analysis cannot proceed as a single logical development. Rather, it is the exploration of a number of themes, returning ever and again to the same facts. We have, however, tried to keep repetition to a minimum. We begin by summarizing the general structure of the myth.

#### THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE MYTH IN SUMMARY

Part I. of the myth establishes an historical base, not necessarily a factual history, of course, but a base that serves to ground the myth in the memory of corporate experience. As we have seen it represents an acceptable gathering culture, acceptable, that is, apart from the greed that mars it.

This level is not represented in Part II. but lies between Jackal (poor quality gathering) and Lion as hunting. Some persons interviewed, we have noted, find agricultural connotations in Part I. That is not its fundamental purpose but it is not unexpected that the later parts should enrich understanding of the earlier as well as vice versa.

Part II. represents a progress to agriculture. It reflects the difficulties of holding the people together and moving them forward, symbolized by the old woman, and by Manongo's willingness to accept the offerings of Hyena and Jackal, perhaps also by the problems of getting Tjakova and Mayenga-Nyambi together. The death and resurrection of Tjakova represent necessary steps in the production of charcoal, and the coming together of Tjakova and Mayenga-Nyambi, that is, the momentous advent of iron. We will return to the question of the reversed order of these events in the text later in this chapter.

Part III. represents the struggle with the earth and unexpectedly, progress to a new climax, the steel plough. Katjetje is also associated with water but whether or not he represents it here, the consumption of the water by the monster makes the availability or otherwise of water part of the climax.

The cyclical structure in Parts I (6 cycles) and II (4 cycles) emphasizes the cyclical structure in experience itself, and this is always further reflected in the telling. The ground clearing sequence at the end of Part II will be

repeated perhaps five or six times (according to time available) and the cycle with the monster in Part III will be repeated the same number of times.

The experience, reflected in these cycles repeated by the teller, of going back from an envisioned climax, perhaps actually experienced for a moment but not retained, is not just a return to the situation at the beginning of that cycle. If that were the case then the bulk of the myth would be an unnecessarily long "historical" base for the last section, but its importance is more than that. Each reversal is to be understood as potentially going all the way back to the beginning of Tjakova's journey, to Hyena and scavenging, that is, back even before the acceptable level of gathering represented by Part I. Neither iron, the steel plough, nor the agricultural intention are lost in Part III, yet the monster carries them back over and again, consuming all that they offer to him. As is suggested throughout and emphasized in the last few verses, it is a problem of water, without which the plough lies idle and natural vegetation takes over again in the cleared areas.

This is the reality that the structure of the myth corresponds to. It is not a history of the progress to a climax but an affirmation that life, as it is experienced now, is a constant cycle of progress and reversal. This statement will be qualified somewhat in that which follows.



## A THEORY BASED ANALYSIS

Hopefully, the first level analysis enabled the reader to appreciate the myth, as an indigenous hearer would, at the immediate and largely conscious level. It remains to apply what has been said in the theoretical section in order to understand what might be being communicated at an unconscious level. We will be seeking to discern what is being communicated directly by the structure of the narrative to feeling, as with the cycles discussed above, what is being communicated via feelings associated symbols and symbolic situations, and what is being communicated as "messages" that might emerge when the narrative is pondered.

We will be concerned with this myth as a tool of religion. That is, we will understand it as a means of expressing the reality to which its adherents would or do belong; a means of conceptualizing it but also as a way of standing back from the immediate moment, to experience what the totality feels like, of experiencing it as as integrated as that perspective can make it, and perhaps to assist in its integration.

We wish to know what the myth communicates in detail, understanding it in general to communicate what the world-out-there feels like now, the past being included, not as history, but in its contribution to present feeling and as a source of symbols to express the same.

## THE VERSIONS AND POSSIBLE GENESIS OF THE PRESENT TEXT

It was said earlier that the task of arriving at a definitive version of the myth and the task of analysis, were not so much successive as interactive. That is to say, before we begin any analysis we need to clean the myth of extraneous elements and to recognize extraneous influences, on the other hand, to decide what is extraneous is already to have begun analysis. What we are about to say, therefore, must be understood to have controlled the choices already made in setting out the definitive version in Chapter 5.

In particular we needed to account for the "versions" that exist in the myth. These are versions 2 and 3 of the birth story and the extra version of the river crossing (which is invariably coupled with version 3 of the birth and is therefore labelled that way) and the little known ending, which closes the myth in what might be considered to be "typical" style, with the hero completing the task himself and being made king.

It is the two alternative sections of text that identify version 3 that are of particular interest, because they point to the possibility of an earlier myth which may have influenced the structure and choice of symbols within the present version, and raise the whole question of the genesis of the Tjakova myth.<sup>1</sup> What follows can only be speculative but it serves to offer a very plausible explanation for some otherwise strange features in the myth.

Version 3 comprises vv. 3-161 to 3-170 (His mother having eaten eagles eggs, Tjakova is born from a large egg) and 3-291 to 3-296 (Tjakova overcomes the River Monsters and enters the land of the Eagle).

These sections of the third version read as follows:

3-161 That scene lasted until the eagle came to that place:

3-162 "Coli-coli-coli!" it screeched and picked up Manongo's father and took him away to the country of the eagles.

3-163 When Manongo came home he found that his mother had given birth to a big egg.

3-164 When the egg was in full term it burst open and Tjakova came out with a bow and arrow.

3-165 Tjakova asked:

3-166 "Where has my father gone?"

3-167 Manongo answered:

3-168 "He has been picked up by the eagle who carried him to the country of the eagles."

3-169 Tjakova said:

3-170 "I am following him wherever it took him."

they continue after Tjakova's death and revival thus:

3-291 When they completed the celebration, Tjakova cut a bamboo with a sharp stone, opened it and it turned into a big boat.

3-292 Tjakova alone got into the boat to cross the big river.

3-293 He encountered many problems with great water monsters which tried to prevent him crossing the river but he defeated each of them.

3-294 When he came into the land of the eagle the eagle said:

3-295 "Take your father back to your country because in our country there is nobody who can defeat you."

3-296 Tjakova took his father back to their country.

The Tjakova myth seems to reflect a recurrent attempt to deal with an inadequate life situation by a cultural-economic migration to an agricultural life-style. It is portrayed however in terms of a physical journey in two stages and, where direction is indicated, a geographical migration westward. We need to ask why this is so.

Cumpsty speaks of the predisposing conditions of an option for Secular World Affirming religion as including cultural or geographical migration. Within such an experience the important thing about time becomes the point at which a long-sort-for objective will be realized and the mode of engagement becomes one of taking hold of the environment and

shaping it. (Cumpsty 1982 p.15) In this matter geographical and cultural migration have an effect in common, and it may be that an open ended geographical migration myth has been taken and used to express an economic migration from scavenging to steel plough, albeit an economic migration that by any standards takes three steps forward and two and a half back.

We begin, therefore, by asking "what would the myth have been like before these people settled in the land, with all its obvious defects, that they have now occupied for well over a century?".

#### THE TENTATIVE RECONSTRUCTION OF A PRE-SETTLEMENT MYTH

We know that the people whose myth this is, as with the ancestors of Israel, spent generations in migration, and that before they arrived in the Kavango they had been long time sojourners. We know that, not unlike Israel in Kadesh-barnea, they spent a considerable time in part of modern Zambia, but always at the permission of another people and not with a sense of permanence.

It has seemed to us that the Myth of The Seven Hunters (see the appendix) belongs to a people, such as these were when in Zambia, settled in one place but looking for a land to

move to. That myth reflects the hope for the day that one of their expeditionaries will return (from across the river) with the message that the place has been found, just as the seventh hunter returned with the beautiful girl whom everyone along the way, coveted.

This myth is related to the traditional history of the elephant hunters who it is believed found a river during an expedition and returned to persuade their people to move.

In such an unstable situation as this sojourn in Zambia, and perhaps in earlier ones, they would have needed a core myth in order to maintain a positive identity and group cohesion. It is not impossible therefore that the Tjakova myth of cultural-economic migration draws heavily upon a previous myth of geographical migration. The "misfit" sections in the Tjakova myth and their location near to his identity-establishing birth and to his death and his marriage to Mayenga-Nyambi may well represent memories of that earlier myth.

For the most part these people were not herders and would be looking for a place where a stable agriculture was possible. Time would to some degree have opened out for them, so that the future point in time at which they found their own land would be at least as important as the seasons that presently provided for them. That in turn would have made possible a developing sense of transcendence and of a providence with a semi-divine intermediary.

Because much of their migration was, according to tradition, along rivers, and because their "lack" (a land with water and therefore a well flowing river) are part of everybody's ideal in this situation, whether we are dealing with a gathering and hunting culture or an agricultural one, it would not be strange that the "good place", the "land of the eagle" was portrayed as being across a river.

Nor would it be strange that the costs of the quest, when they were high, be symbolized as "river monsters" that had to be overcome by the hero before the benefits could be obtained.

In our knowledge of these people a number of associated themes recur, among them the "history" of those who, having crossed a river, followed an eagle believing it to be their god.

It is, therefore, worth considering the following elements of a reconstructed geographical migration myth as the background to the principal version of the Tjakova myth.

#### THE PRE-SETTLEMENT MYTH ?

The myth's central theme would be of a prosperous land on the other side of a river, to which they are being led by the divine, symbolized and, from time to time, manifested as an eagle.

Such an overall venture might well have called for a charismatic mythic leader with extraordinary, even magical powers, such as Tjakova manifests in the production of the boat and the associated flood, but nowhere else in the myth.

Such a leader would not require continuity with his people and their past, as does Tjakova as leader in a cultural migration. Thus the third version of Tjakova's birth, in which he comes from a large egg, associated with the consumption of eagles eggs, could well have belonged to a geographical migration myth. It is clearly the less appropriate version for the present myth.

Insofar as time had opened out for them, the people in this earlier myth would be appropriately led by a symbol of divinity, an eagle, and the "son" of the eagle, in search of the Land of the Eagle.

Before his death and revival, Tjakova seeks his bride, Mayenga-Nyambi (decoration of god). Mayenga-Nyambi is a name associated with, and almost certainly once given to, moon and stars and thence associated with iron-stone nodules (thought to have fallen from the sky) but it also happens that 'mayenga' is the plural form of the word for an access to a river and which is usually a crossing. The mythic hero of a geographical migration myth could have been seeking just such a river crossing into the "promised land" every bit as much as charcoal needed to come together with iron-stone for smelting in the cultural migration myth.



If this tentative reconstruction were indeed the case it would account for what in the present myth is the strange fact that the hero searches for and finds Mayenga-Nyambi (representing ironstone) before his death and revival symbolically relate him to charcoal, and before he makes his boat to cross the river. One would have expected Tjakova's death and revival, in which his significance as charcoal is manifested, to have come before his quest for Mayenga-Nyambi and the coming together of charcoal and ironstone to have happened over the river, that is, in the land where agriculture called for iron. Tjakova's "conversion" to charcoal and his followers' attempt to clear the ground for agriculture might also have been expected to take place across the river.

In the earlier myth, and in gentler times, the quest could have been focused metaphorically upon the hero finding a river crossing rather upon his struggle with the river monsters and that could have been symbolized as his search for the beautiful Mayenga-Nyambi. Then, her later association with the iron stone nodules, while becoming dominant, did not sufficiently displace the former meaning for it to be lost. Therefore her present position in the myth has been retained even though its logic seems wrong for her new association.

Again, the struggle of Tjakova with the river monsters, which has no recognizable significance in the present myth, could well be an expression, in harder times, of the people's struggle to find a new place to dwell, and

represented as the hero's struggle to cross a river to the Land of the Eagle.

The magical production of a large boat to get his people across the river has no obvious significance in this myth but every place in a geographical migration. We note the parallel in the myth of the Seven Hunters referred to above.

Whether the migration led the people to "put their god where their hope was" and to move into a Secular World Affirming perspective, or whether they remained in an Immediate Experience affirming stance, the myth could not remain closed, in the manner of version 3, once the hoped for situation, which the myth represented, had been achieved.

Generally there is a tendency to close myth in the Immediate Experience Affirming world-view but even in cyclical time this kind of closure is not always desirable. We have noted the frequency with which hero myths in Africa end with the death or driving out of the hero, sometimes by those who have been served. Cumpsty understands this to both return the myth to the nature of reality actually experienced and also to enable the beneficial cycle to start again. In the Secular World Affirming tradition he notes the problem for modern Jews in the extent to which the State of Israel constitutes a cashing of the "hope for a long expected Zion". (Cumpsty, 1984, p.37) In that tradition not-yet-ness must remain or the world-view is destroyed.

The desire to close this present myth in traditional style is reflected in the little known ending that we have labelled version 4. There it seems only to reflect that tendency and nothing else. We will not return to it. The version in 3-291 to 3-296 is also closed as follows:-

"When he came into the land of the eagle the eagle said: "Take your father back to your country because in our country there is nobody who can defeat you."  
Tjakova took his father back to their country."

Tjakova's overt quest, to find the land of the Eagle and/or his father, is over. The myth could only have ended there.

Such closure might have existed while the geographical migration was in progress, representing a future hope supported by the contemporary sense of reality, but not when it was complete. Then it would be necessary, as with Moses prevented from entering the land, to dispose of the hero and make a new beginning in the new place. Elements of the myth might be retained to express the sense of reality in the new situation, but not, of course, as a geographical migration myth. The story would be retained, for a while at least, in communal memory, but it would no longer be myth.

We may be seeing here stages in the development of the myth.

## POSSIBLE STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MYTH

In the first stage, that is in the myth of the geographical migration, the people are led by an eagle (who had perhaps carried away the father of the hero - see below) in search of the "promised land", the land of the eagle.

The quest for Mayenga-Nyambi (the river crossing) and the struggle with the river monsters, might well represent refinements to the myth at a stage when they thought that they were near their destination but the land was not coming into possession. The myth would then need to focus upon the final struggle and a specific symbol of closure. Thus the triumphal entry into the new land after the hero had, single handed, overcome the river monsters. That is to say, this, now strangely inappropriate, piece in the third version could well have been the myth's final section in the period immediately prior to entering the Kavango area.

The next stage, if it followed the usual practice of hero myths in this part of the world, would see the hero assassinated or driven out after his success. That is, the migration myth would be modified, in this case, by the death of the hero-figure once the people had arrived at their destination. The version 3 river crossing would then have become the penultimate section in a myth expressing a sense of a providence leading to this new beginning. The death of the hero figure as he entered the land and his burial during the ground clearing would be quite in keeping with the need to emphasize the gains, but render a return to the normal

undeniable. At that stage the death would have rounded out the myth.

At the stage remembered by the older members of the present community, the myth had been extended to include iron smelting and the old hero became the new hero (almost certainly with a new name) of a continuing struggle with the new land. In this stage the death associated with the climax of the old cycle remained sufficiently important to be retained, but now it had the added meaning of representing, with his resurrection, Tjakova's relation to charcoal, and it takes place before he crosses the river and enters upon the struggle to achieve what the availability of iron had promised. That is to say, the river now symbolizes not entry into the new land but the divide between everything that went before, including the discovery of iron, and the present experience of struggle with the thirsty earth.

There is little reason to suppose that the quest for the father taken by the eagle was not the myth that gave meaning to and motivated the continuation of the migration, as is suggested above. This is because, from the perspective of an Immediate Experience Affirming world-view, the quest for the father, representing as it does a recovered past, might be a more important emphasis than the land of the eagle, which represents something new.

Ijakova in the present myth, of course, is of the flesh of his father and is made to speak of "my Father" as though he were not Manongo's father also, both of these, presumably, emphasize his continuity with the old culture that is moving into a new one.

#### A PRE-MIGRATION MYTH ?

When one notes the suitability of the geographical myth for adaptation to a cultural-economic migration myth one is led to ask about the source of the migration myth itself. Then one can become even more speculative and, reversing the situation at the other end, suppose that these people, having once had an experience of struggle in a settled agricultural context, employed a myth of cyclical cultural-economic migration generated by that experience as the basis for their geographical migration myth.

This suggestion that the cyclical cultural-economic migration section of the present myth pre-dates the settlement and therefore probably the migration itself, while in keeping with the evidence, is not, of course, required by it. It is certainly invested with traditional actors however.

## PRE-SETTLEMENT MYTH - SUMMARY and COMMENT

It is possible, even probable, that the economic images present in Parts I and II, up to the coming to the river, represented the core of a pre-migration myth. In the migration the economic myth came to represent a people (led by an eagle who had carried away the father of the hero) in a migration represented in terms of cultural advancement (toward a prosperous agriculture but not excluding hunting and superior gathering) as well as in geographical terms.

The name of the hero in the geographical migration myth would not have been Tjakova, if our association of that name with iron production is correct. The only name that is still familiar and could possibly have been that of the leader, is to be found in a myth with a birth story that has parallels with the birth of Tjakova. It is included in the Appendix and is that of Chief Sambilikita, whose name and actions do suggest a person with special, perhaps magical, powers.

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The parallels in the earlier myth with the Israelites looking for their land flowing with milk and honey, led by a pillar of fire or smoke, needing to justify their failure to enter the land, and whose leader needed to be taken away before the new experience in the land began so that they came to expect "one like unto him", has no necessary

connection with missionaries, but with similarities in experience.

The similarities do not end there, of course. In so far as the struggle in the land is post-heroic, whatever element of transcendence has entered in is threatened by the cyclical sameness of experience, with very little evidence, except the long past, to support a hope for the future. Transcendence would have died here, as it would have died in Israel, had there not been the longer cycles promising progress. For Israel, it was their position on the fertile crescent which ensured that when they controlled their environment they prospered dramatically, but equally, it meant that every other serious power in the area needed to dominate it also. Three times in the three centuries between the disintegration of David's kingdom and the Babylonian captivity, they exercised such control. In Kavango the period has been shorter but so also have the dearth-prosperity cycles (see "rainfall cycles" below), and hope received a boost, first from the availability of iron and then from the steel plough. (Cumpsty, 1982)

The parallels are not quite the same, of course, for there was a sense in which Biblical Israel felt that it had achieved its goal and then lost it. The Kavango situation is more like modern Israel in which the excitement of the new state, felt to be the long expected Zion, waned in the face of the realities and needed an extension of the myth toward "zionist fulfillment". (Cumpsty, 1984, p.36)



Version 2 of the birth of Tjakova, which is the only "misfit" section that we have not referred to, seems to have nothing special to contribute and to be only a blending of the other two versions.

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#### ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPAL VERSION OF THE MYTH

Coming to an analysis of the principal version of the myth we must seek to distinguish what it must communicate as myth and what is communicated by its narrative format and how the latter feeds the former.

As myth it must, according to Cumpsty, communicate necessarily (i) the feeling of reality as that is experienced by its adherents contemporaneously and, with advantage, (ii) a symbolic conceptualization of reality and perhaps a mode of belonging to that reality.

In general, (i) may be achieved in part, directly and unconsciously, as the myth reflects the structures of experience (in this case, that of struggle, with hope and reversals in cycles) and in part, via conscious recognition of such things as human behaviour unconsciously reinforcing the sense of reality in the myth, but also from the overt

"message" of the myth. While (ii) may arise from the message of the myth, which may be conveyed in narrative form. In other situations it might be conveyed in doctrinal or legal material.

We begin this analysis with (i) above. We are not at this time in a position to know whether the deep structure of a narrative, as distinct from the overt content, can convey feelings on a near universal basis, as music and other art forms might be thought to do, nor do we know whether certain structures had come to connote certain feelings for these particular people, as again art and music and other cultural forms had come to do, therefore we enter the analysis at the level of overt pattern and ask whether the patterning of the myth reflects the patterning of the reality experienced, for that is as near as we can get to asking if it reflects their "felt sense of reality". The felt sense of reality is not immediately accessible even to the adherents themselves. One can only seek to discover the structures in the myth and ask if they conform to what is a likely sense of reality, given what is known of the historical experience of the people concerned and the beliefs through which they interpreted it.

In order to see what the myth communicates both directly and via indirectly communicated meanings, we must remind ourselves of the ongoing process of corporate adjustment that controlled the content of the myth. This is what Cumpsty speaks of as the "distillation centre" of the

"tradition community".<sup>2</sup> and, in this sort of situation, likens to group psychoanalysis seeking the community's deep feelings about reality. Whoever creates the myth, whoever modifies it, it is not the myth of the community unless, and until, "the tradition community embraces it".

The manner of telling of the Tjakova myth very well illustrates the processes of incarnation and distillation. In fact the processes are most unusually overt.

The myth was recounted regularly and while the appropriate cycles would sometimes be repeated and thus stressed, the telling had to be completed at a sitting. The myth is a whole and potentially too important to expose to the danger of being dealt with in parts.

The interesting thing about the telling of this myth is that it was always monitored by other elders in the group, who would break in, not only to correct but to suggest modification ... "would it not be better if it were said like this... ". This monitoring would have two effects. The first would be to conserve the myth in its corporately acceptable form, protecting against lapses of memory or any idiosyncratic whims of the teller. The second would be to keep the myth deeply in tune with the communities felt sense of reality. These could, of course, pull against each other in times of change but given the seriousness of the purpose, this could only have ensured that the myth did reflect feelings in depth.

that the myth was so carefully monitored reflects its central importance in the identity of the community. It does not primarily serve to integrate or explain away aberrant aspects of experience threatening the model of reality nor does it set out to communicate the communities values, save perhaps that it is against greed and, perhaps, in favour of progress. It is primarily a core, identity myth. It invites the hearer to stand back from the problems of the moment and to be embraced by a sense of reality generated in much wider perspective.

It is more the answer to the question Who are we?, than to the dependent question, What are we?. In more familiar context, the Israelite might have answered to the first question "We are a nation born of Abraham, elected by Yahweh, rescued from Egypt, taken into covenant at Sinai and given this land". To the second question he might have answered, "We are those who keep the commandments". This myth is the answer to the former question. It is about the nature of the ultimately real and of their relation to it. It is what Cumpsty quotes Karl Barth as calling "The language of Canaan". Its consequences for action are not spelled out here. We will return to this theme later.

The content of the myth, we will see later, also suggests that, at a second level, it fulfills the bridging role so important for an integrated identity, individual or communal, in a mixed paradigm situation.

Given what we know of the process of regular recital, that it had to be completed at each telling, and that any responsible member of the community could challenge it and suggest modification, means that we must at least accept as a starting point that the myth did indeed reflect the felt sense of reality of the community it continued to grasp.

Having recognized that the myth had every chance of truly reflecting the felt sense of reality of the community members, we need to further recognize that this is indeed myth and not history, and recall what Cumpsty has to say about the immediacy of myth:

I must re-emphasize that if religion is concerned with belonging, that is with identity and its securing, then myth, as the mode of discourse for the communication of the primary religious experience of reality as a whole, must express what reality is felt to be now. That is, it must express my long run experience of that to which I would be related, as that is right now. (p.510)

Myth is not history, nor is it some unattested hope. History certainly plays the major role in creating a sense of reality, perhaps in the long run it is the only significant factor, and certainly, the present sense of reality may be such as to support a future hope, but neither the history nor the future hope is of the essence of myth. It represents, and enables one to relate to, reality as it is experienced now, good, bad

or irrational. What is felt to be real may include a movement to a future, which may even be described in terms of a lost past, but it is reality as it is now.

If the reality expressed is not all-that-out-there, but rather the other side of the coin, the identity of the individual or the community, then history is a quite basic expression of reality. How I got here and where I am going to, is one expression of who I am at this eternal moment. Nevertheless, where I was and where I will be, are not now real. (p.314)

Myth, he says, may have to address specific bits of experience that are aberrant and threaten the overall feeling for, or modelling of reality, but it is still the present whole that is its primary concern.

With these points in mind, we turn to the question of structures in reality itself, and to asking what underlying structure the myth displays that conforms to that reality and therefore presumably to its adherents' felt sense of reality.

Were this story to be history then it would offer an account of a people's progress from a gathering, even scavenging culture, through a variety of changes to an agricultural

economy based on the steel plough. We might be standing at the end (the monster having given up the riches of its stomach), still with some lingering suggestion about the shortage of water; or we might be standing well along the way and confident of further progress in the same direction.

This is not history, however, it is myth, and the whole picture that it presents is of the present reality. We are not presented with a picture of a progression that once happened, but with the awareness that that progression itself is the constant reality. We are presented with cycles, and while there may be seen to be some permanent gain in each group of cycles, it must also be seen as a constant return to square one. Scavenging is not something of the past only but also of the future. Just as the benefits of agriculture lie in the past and also in the future. During a down-swing the myth gives encouragement, during an up-swing it sobers. It offers that longer view of reality which is the function of myth.

As was said above, the felt sense of reality is not immediately accessible and one can only seek to discover the structures in the myth and then ask if they conform to what is a likely sense of reality.

While many peoples have migrated and show little effect of it in their mythology<sup>3</sup> and many have struggled long with the earth, assisted by iron or otherwise, there is a particular aspect of these peoples experience that keeps a sense of

transcendence gained in migration, alive, but not totally dominant.

Field work having revealed something of the corporate historical experience, not only the facts, of course, but also the impressions and, as far as possible, the spectacles, both cognitive and affective, through which it has been seen, including the total world-view in which it took its meaning, we are in a position to seek to relate the myth to what we know of the experience of the people and ask why the cycles are repeated.

When we do that, we are led to understand that the cycle is related to a shortage of water, which means rainfall, not river water, for it was on the former that agriculture depended.

Most areas receive rainfall in annual cycles, for some it is semi-annual. Here there are cycles within cycles, the annual rainfall moving from plenty to insufficient and back again. Every now and again it moves from flood proportions to drought. Nature is not simply cyclical. It keeps promising more, encouraging a hope that agriculture can flourish. With the cultural migration (the appearance of iron and then the steel plough) there has been a greater hope, but the fruits of the progress have not been retained for long at a time. Soon the hope was frustrated to the point that the population were returned, if not to scavenging, then to reliance on hunting and the poorer forms of gathering.



There are some small natural compensations in the situation in that when there is rain for agriculture there is rain for water-holes and the animals go deep into bush. Hunting is, therefore difficult. When there is no rain the animals come to the river and hunting is easier.

When we ask about the length of these cycles the myth suggests a sufficient period of time for a real sense of progress to be generated and remembered, but also for knowledge of the reverse process to be within the experience of each generation and for the cycle to begin again and be recognized as a cycle. The testimony of the older members of the community suggested that both up-swings and down were within their memory. We came to the conclusion that this meant somewhere between ten and twenty years, and then went looking for rainfall information.

Rainfall figures for the immediate area were not available for any length of time, but climatologists in Central and Southern Africa suggest a twelve to fourteen year cycle in their area. Climatologists had searched early missionary records in the attempt to extend their information back behind systematic rainfall measurements. Having been warned not to trust anecdotal material, and not understanding myth to reflect a corporately controlled account of reality, they had not been interested in the myths that preceded the missionaries. We hope that we have revised their opinion.

It becomes clear at this point that even the structure displayed by the myth does not communicate a feeling of reality independent of the world-view held or, more precisely, independent of what Cumpsty would identify as the paradigm for reality employed. How much the cycles are understood simply as cycles, or as cycles giving way to new cycles and producing a sort of spiral effect, that is, giving rise to some degree of real progress, will depend on where the individual stands in relation to the two operative paradigms.

#### THE MYTH IN TWO WORLD-VIEWS

One of the strengths of the Tjakova myth for a community in transition is that it can reflect both of two very different interpretations of experience and therefore hold them together, to be what Cumpsty calls a bridging myth.

Because the myth remains open, one is tempted to treat it as though it represents a move toward the Secular World Affirming type and this would accord with much in the people's experience. We have just indicated why African myth is frequently not closed by success, but is returned to reality and the possibility of a new beginning. That does not necessitate, however, the degree of openness that this myth displays. On the other hand one must not over-emphasize the change in world-view because of the openness and must therefore be prepared to understand the myth within an

Immediate Experience Affirming world-view. We will deal with the former possibility first.

#### The Myth in Goal-Oriented World-View

Within a goal oriented world-view the myth represents the experience of constant struggle toward an adequate agricultural economy. It represents an uphill climb in which one regularly slides back. There is, however, progress (from gathering to agriculture with implements of natural materials, from there to iron and to the steel plough). The myth is not cyclical but spiral. Water remains a problem but one may look for progress in the control of that also. The struggle exists because of human greed in the gathering culture (the "villainy" or "fall") but there is a providence (though that is not yet highly personal) working a salvation and Tjakova is its representative, those who oppose him, oppose the divine. There is a sense of human development that is, "fallen" and "redeemed" humanity is preferred to unfallen humanity. We will return to the significance of this below.

#### The Myth in Present Texture Oriented World-View

Within a present texture oriented world-view, the greed that destroyed the gathering culture seeks to overcome the consequences of its own action by struggling to better technically organize its wresting of a living from the

earth. Each seeming progress is followed by a slide back however, and all the technical "advances" prove to be illusion in the absence of water. That is, the myth is cyclical not spiral. Tjakova and all that he stands for represent a continuation of the problem in the human condition. The Eagle's leading is to the message that the problem lies in human greed and the failure of rapport with nature, a problem that cannot be overcome by technical improvements. This may not seem to mesh with the manner in which Tjakova, and later Katjetje, is presented but the test of Secular World Affirming religion according to Cumpsty is chance or voluntariness in the ultimately-real. The evidence is that among these people, even among those who have long been Christian, life is a closed system of cause and effect. If something goes wrong, there is always a cause to be discovered and remedied, as there here.

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Thus we see that, as was said above, structure is not the primary matter, world-view is primary. How the cycles giving way to cycles is experienced depends on the paradigm in operation - it may express a feeling of real progress - it may express a feeling that progress is an illusion.

## THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF REALITY

Just as it is clear that the structure displayed by the myth does not communicate a feeling of reality independent of the world-view held, so also is it the case at the level of communication of meaning. This brings us to the analysis under (ii) above, the potentially more overtly conscious and cognitive communication. We begin by posing Calloud's question:

"... we need to ask at the very beginning of the analysis,

"What is lacked?

By whom?

What is communicated?

What are the objects which are transmitted?

What are the 'loci' of communication?" p.34.

We do this first because it reveals so clearly that there are two sets of answers, determined by the paradigm for reality within which the interrogator is standing. Even the "lacks" are not identical.

Calloud suggests that "It is important at this stage to reconstruct the function of the "villainy" which leads to the manifestation of the lack and definition of the quest. By means of the "villainy" it is possible to locate the inverse (or negative) sender."

Calloud remarks that "The Sender is often hidden. The society or one of its aspects occupies frequently the position of sender." Here, perhaps, it is greed, as an aspect of society, which is the negative sender.

The Sender throughout is represented as the eagle, which in this culture is a significant symbol of the divine. As we have said, the divine is not highly personalized and in many parts of the myth, conceptualization as a largely impersonal providence would suffice. This last, of course, depends upon the paradigm from which one is viewing the myth.

The immediate precipitating cause, the "villainy" and the "negative sender" that it identifies, is all that remains the same about the myth in both world-views, but even ones attitude to these changes. The Sender has the same symbolic reference throughout, but must be more personally conceived when transcendence enters in. All else changes; "lack", "subject", "opponent", "object" and "helpers" are all different or to be differently perceived. We will examine them in more detail.

The "Villainy" is symbolized in the greed of Manongo's father. It presents the Negative Sender as a greedy spirit in this particular gathering-society, or perhaps in humankind. A sort of "fallenness" that thrusts humankind out of the "Paradise" of a successful gathering culture and into the struggle with the environment for "progress". Manongo's

father is only attacked at the level of greed not when gathering necessities. The rituals of relation with the natural order, exemplified in those with the path and with the tree, are carefully observed, but the spirit of the relationship is wrong.

Yet even the Negative Sender and the Villainy that identifies it may be perceived differently. The greed of society, in the Immediate Experience Affirming world-view, has nothing good to be said for it. In the Secular World Affirming world-view, while no one would seek its maintenance, the greed is the jumping off point for progress. Much Christian theology has pointed to the "Fall" as the point where man becomes man, the point at which, being apart from God, he may voluntarily choose to return, to become friend rather than servant of God. In other terms, the fall establishes the existential alienation that drives the adherent of the goal-oriented traditions. While it is seldom said to be the result of Divine providence, the fall is not all bad. As was said above, "fallen and redeemed humanity is preferred to unfallen humanity".

Later in the myth, and from the goal-oriented perspective, the Negative Sender is presented as a Reactionary Spirit against Tjakova's "progress", always manifesting self-interest. Consider Manongo's acceptance of the scraps and berries offered by Hyena and Jackal, and the old woman's desire for sex rather than agreeing to provide the fire that Tjakova had asked for, the provision of which was a matter of neighbourliness but also, perhaps, a forevision of

charcoal and iron. This reactionary spirit is too much identified with the basic greed to understand it as the helper of the negative sender. The Negative Helper, in this world-view, is better identified with the old woman and with aspects of the behaviour of Jackal and Manongo.

In the early section we see the Positive Sender acting without helper, that is the eagle acting without Tjakova, although the literal eagle is helper of what Eagle symbolizes. The Sender is characterized by patience, all the animals placed in the nest provide a warning and Hare offers a final challenge to Manongo's father, as the representative of the old culture, before Eagle deals fatefully with him.

What is missing, the "Lack", might be said to be in very general terms "A Right Spirit", but the moment one begins to cash that expression in more context-related terms, the difference between the two world-views comes into play and, in the goal-oriented one, "what is needed" changes as the myth proceeds unless one simply describes it as "progress".

In so far as one remains within the Immediate Experience Affirming paradigm the "Lack" may be expressed as "a real respect for the natural order" (contrast the ritual observance with the actual destructive relationship in which nothing is left for birds etc. or for seed). This lack might be located in turn in a lack of awe before the divine and its messengers (consider Manongo's father's rudeness to Hare



when he appears in that capacity). In the myth this Lack is not filled but displaced, the culture changes. In the end the situation is little better, at root, life is still life and people are people. Only a lesson has been presented on the futility of "progress", or the quest for progress as an extension of greed.

In so far as one stands in the Secular World Affirming paradigm the needed "right spirit" is quickly displaced from a proper rapport with the natural order to become a commitment to progress. "Progress" is cashed as a move toward agriculture, then to agriculture with iron implements and finally the steel plough. Water appears as the new "lack" at the end of this open ended quest. Progress is supposed, there is no going back. The Sender leads along a path, the next stage in which might be to build dams. Whether the basic problem (of a right relation to the creation and the divine) remains in this world-view, depends, perhaps, on one's view of the self-sufficiency of technology and on one's ecological experience.

How one understands Katjetje's demand to be paid in grain, in the last section of the myth, will also depend on perspective. It may be there as a last minute reminder of the remaining self-interest, it may emphasize the continuing cost to humankind of its proper quest, it may simply add a touch of reality.

Calloud says of the "object" that "If an object in the narrow and material sense of the term is communicated, we need to ponder what position it occupies or hides and to reconstitute the complete network of relations which lies under this "meaning effect." Here again, the "natural" should not mislead the analyst .... Note that the "negative" objects are manifested either as attribution of a "harmful" object, or as deprivation of a "useful" object."

Objects in the material sense are few in this myth. They begin with eagles' eggs and they end with all the "benefits" which burst from the Monster's stomach when Katjetje opens it. At the next level there is the Subject's struggle with the Monster on the people's behalf. At another level there is iron and the steel plough, but these are better seen, in the Secular World Affirming perspective, as elements in the communication of "progress", which is itself an element in the "Object".

At the deepest level in both perspectives is the communication of the "Message". In one it concerns progress and divine leading, in the other "progress" is an extension of greed and futile. The Message is the nature of reality, the paradigm on offer.

Other "Objects", are those that establish and equip the Subject, most of which are given in the inheritance (or incarnation) of the Sender in the Subject, signalled in the

eggs consumed, the muce root ritual and the miraculous birth, but recognized in operation. "Volition" appears immediately in Tjakova's determination upon his quest (symbolized as the search for the father), "Cognition" appears in Tjakova's discrimination concerning what is acceptable or not acceptable in the new culture, "Power" appears, as already communicated, in the making of the boat and the "whistling" for the flood, in the "putting up" of the trees and the revival from death. Earlier it appears from the Sender via the Helper in the form of Hare and his Thumb Piano. The latter is used by Tjakova in his quest for Mayenga Nyambi before he manifests any inherent power other than his leadership qualities. It is Hare who first confronts the old woman, the negative sender's helper, with the "magic" thumb piano.

These "Objects" it is said, identify the "Subject". In so far as the Subject is distinguished from the Sender by being the actor through which things are actually caused to happen and obstacles are overcome, it is clear that Tjakova is the Subject of the myth. However it must be recognized that the story begins without Tjakova and ends without him. That it begins without him is not simply a setting of the stage for him to appear. A whole realm of experience is presented before his advent. At the end all the personages have disappeared, Manongo, Hare, Mayenga-Nyambi, even Katjetje. In the final analysis it is the whole experience, orchestrated by the Sender and for the most part activated by Tjakova, that is the Subject, the bearer of the message (the object).

If one left out the last act (Tjakova in the background and Katjetje opening the dead Monster) one could understand Tjakova as the Subject (in the Immediate Experience Affirming world-view, as also an extension of the problem) and the three tests as (i) birth to Honeybear - communicating "vigour" (the right to be the hero), (ii) marriage, death and revival complex - communicating "value or goods" (iron), and (iii) the struggle with the monster - communicating the "message" (the continuing struggle, with the earth ever swallowing up water). With the last act in place and the whole experience as the Subject, the "qualifying" or "invigourating" test, becomes the adverse experience of the gathering culture which projects the whole drama, the "main" or "endowing" test becomes the whole story of the progress to agriculture and the struggle to maintain it, and the "glorifying" test becomes the deliberately open-end from which the message is distilled. Either reality is a providentially led progress, or progress is an illusion moved by the same greed that despoiled the gathering culture.

In this last interpretation Tjakova becomes not so much an inverse subject as a catalyst in events, or a subject duped by the Sender into delivering a negative object, which will lead to a positive message.

Those who resist Tjakova are not by this move converted to a positive role. If they were simply reactionary that might be the case. However, they each manifest the continuing self-interest of Manongo's father.

We will not continue to draw upon Jean Calloud's approach to the structural analysis of myth. In the process of considering the "actantial roles", we have located and considered the "performancial syntagms". These being the points in story of "decision" or denouement, the places where it comes together and "where one sees what it is that is in confrontation, which wins, what is gained or lost". As we have indicated, these "moments" and what takes place within them also shift according to the paradigm for reality in operation.

For reasons stated earlier we have not attempted any structural analysis of the Tjakova myth as myth. There is nothing in this myth that would suggest that it is to be best understood as a reconciliation of oppositions in experience. The opposition lies rather in the paradigms through which the experience might be understood. They are bridged by the myth in the sense that they provide alternative interpretations of the experience.

Having examined the interpretations of the myth in the two relevant paradigms for reality, we must now give attention to the myth as the manifestation of the community's felt sense of reality and ask where, from that perspective, it is best located in relation to the paradigms. For this purpose we have asked how the myth relates to each of the elements, identified in Cumpsty's table, where these would differ from one to the other and where the myth in any way relates to them. Our findings are set out below.

## WHERE IS THIS MYTH LOCATED WITHIN THE POSSIBLE PARADIGMS ?

The background world-view, to which the experiences that are used as the vehicles for expression of the sense of reality belong, is clearly that of Immediate Experience Affirming Religion. Humankind and the natural order are at one, everything having its place in the overall structure of things. Nevertheless, the myth itself manifests features of the Secular World Affirming Paradigm. It seems to be goal orientated and to recommend a mode of engagement that includes taking hold and shaping. Both modes of belonging are represented, in the beginning there is a strong emphasis upon ritual unity with the natural order and later belonging requires a commitment to the future. That the slain father is more remote than one would expect an ancestor to be, might suggest a developing sense of transcendence but it should not be made too much of. It is clearly a device of the story.

### i) The Myth is Open Ended:

If all that was felt about reality was that it was an endless round of gain and loss one would expect the myth to close somewhat as it does in minority version 4, but it remains open. Katjetje, if not present, remains available; Tjakova is not assassinated nor driven out but only moves into the background; the quest that drives the whole myth, the quest for Tjakova's Father or the Land of the Eagle is left unresolved. The difference is that something of the

nature of the looked-for destiny is known - the steel plough and water.

Not only is the quest unresolved but its lack of resolution is not commented upon, as though it is assumed that it still goes on and there remains the possibility of other episodes.

The experience of progress attests to the possibility of a further climax beyond that experienced thus far. It offers a hope that the climax could be retainable but the myth does not present that as the present felt nature of reality, nor would the known history of these people support it. The paradigms are mixed.

Thus the structure of the myth is such as might have found acceptance in Israel in the period between the death of Solomon and the Assyrian exile, not with the prophets, who sought to keep the seed of transcendence that had been sown in the migration alive, but with the ordinary people. For those people too had inherited a model of reality with a strong future hope together with the memory of progressive climaxes, (the crossing of a river into a land that would after many reversals become their own) who now only experienced periods of partial recovery and reversal. (Cumpsty, 1984)

It is interesting that the holy site, the sacred mountain, of this people is, like Sinai, also in inhospitable terrain. Not in their own land, but not so far away as to feel unreal. It may not be a strong symbol of transcendence but

it prevents adherents believing that the world begins and ends at home.

ii) The Myth is Dynamic:

The destiny in an affluent agriculture, which the myth presents as its climax, would no longer be the literal hope for many of the people whose myth this is. For most, life and expectations have shifted under the influence of urbanization. Life may not be much better but the goals have changed.

This would not matter if the same sort of balance between reversals and hoped for progress was maintained. For this is already to some degree a dynamic myth. Just as urban Christians can still employ symbols like sheep, wolves and shepherds; the literal destiny of the myth, the finding of the Father etc., could now stand for whatever was hoped for.

As was indicated in the theoretical section, myths which belong wholly in the Immediate World Affirming type locate security in permanence, and worthwhileness in the grandeur of the order, while those in the Secular World Affirming type must locate security during flux, in a permanent direction of change, and worthwhileness in the grandeur of purpose.

There are many reasons why the myth has fallen into disuse among the younger generation: the lack of communal



opportunity, the lack of the supportive setting in which Lion might very well roar as his name was mentioned and, not least, a lost ear for symbolic discourse.

The myth may one day become popular again, but, if it should do so in an urban and technological setting, it will need to undergo a shift in emphasis. In the form in which it has been recorded the balance lies with the cyclical nature of reality and therefore the myth manifests some of the deep pessimism of Ecclesiastes. As Cumpsty says "It is not easy to return to being a happy nature religionist having experienced a goal orientation". (Cumpsty, 1982, p.18)

Thus, while this is not a static myth, most of the security that it offers is in the permanence of the cycles, so that if one would embrace the hope of moving up one must accept the inevitability of once again moving down. It is this emphasis upon the cyclical rather than the linear that presently renders the myth less than real in the technological and socio-political situation of these people.

### iii) The Ultimately Real becomes Personal:

The ultimately real may be modeled as personal in any of the paradigms. In the Secular 'World Affirming' type it must be. The test of personal here is whether it can exercise volition or whether it is manipulable. Here the symbol of what is sought, the Land of the Eagle, is given some personal quality by the Father but only a passive one.

The Eagle and those related to him or to the power that he represents (Hare and Pangolin) certainly seem to exercise volition in the affairs of men. Pangolin complains that Eagle does not exercise proper choice but is soft with everybody, but then Eagle changes that. The oft repeated cry "Eagle lead me" certainly suggests volition on its part. That the environmentally destructive factor of greed is symbolized as sin against Eagle (rather than sickness), that he in turn punishes it in a manner that precipitates the migration, indicates responsibility and therefore freedom, and therefore in turn, the personal, in both humankind and the Divine.

With these three points in mind it nevertheless remains the case that the dominant feeling of the myth is cyclical and that if there is any real progress it is via spiral rather than a linear path. It is clear that both paradigms are in operation and therefore that we must turn our attention to the relationship between them.

#### THE TJAKOVA CYCLE AS BRIDGING MYTH

Cumpsty writes of bridging in two senses. The one is where two or more paradigms co-exist in a community and there is a struggle for integrity of individual identity and for cohesion in community values. The other is where a tradition is under pressure to shift paradigms and it begins to put out feelers toward the paradigm to which the pressure

suggests that it should move. He mentions developments in Hinduism that pre-dated the inception of the Buddhist tradition as possible examples of this. (Cumpsty, 1991, p.820)

It would be possible to understand the Tjakova myth as an example of the former type in which case its inception would have had to post-date the coming of strong Secular World Affirming (in this case Christian) influence.

The evidence both internal and external, is against this. There seem to be no borrowed symbols, nor borrowed new content for old symbols. To find a reflection of the Trinity in the repeated threes of Part I. is very forced, and the flood that washes away the remnants of the old order, and the resurrection of Tjakova, have better explanations. There are, of course, parallels between the experiences of these people and those of Biblical Israel as we have already indicated.

There may have been some European influence via what is today Botswana, as the continuing interrelation with kin settled there, and perhaps an English source for the name "Tjakova", suggest, but there is little other evidence for this.

The earliest Christian mission in these parts dates from 1910 and while they taught agriculture and used the steel plough, it seems likely that the latter came a little earlier from the North. Thus while the present significance of Katjetje at the end of the myth is undoubtedly as late as the coming of the steel plough, the Tjakova myth in general

goes back as far as living memory, and with less certainty, as far as living memory truly reflects what the last generation communicated to its children of its own history.

The struggle of humankind with the earth in an iron assisted agriculture goes back a long way in Africa. 4

If, as Cumpsty suggests, people put their god where their hope is, this people, who almost certainly migrated from East Africa and were looking for a place of their own for many generations, needed to adapt their mythology and put out feelers toward a Secular World Affirming model of reality.

Seen in this light the Tjakova myth is a bridging myth of particular interest. Bridging may take place in some apologetic theological process, in a tightly integrated story including elements from both paradigms, in a charismatic person or in a flexible history of some person or event.<sup>5</sup> Here it takes the form of the integrated story, and one that interweaves the deepest factors in the paradigms themselves, so that the myth can be read from the perspective of either paradigm. It represents reality as these people currently experienced it in all its complexity, including its competing paradigms.

Instead of cyclical or linear time we have linear progress via a number of cycles. At every stage reality is represented by cycles, new highpoints being reached from

cycle to cycle but with each going back to the beginning. It may be that the deliberate overturning of familiar traditional relations in the early sections of the myth serve as pointers to the development of new directions and therefore as an indicator of the attempt to "bridge out".

The style is flexible so that when present experience is on the way down or low in the cycle, the cycle itself could be emphasized for it is real in experience and could only turn up. When present experience is high the cycle could be underplayed and the openness of the future emphasized, for there is evidence for the reality of that too. Equally the cycles might be used to sober the upswing and vice versa and thus dampen oscillations in mood. There is little doubt that this is indeed a very sophisticated bridging myth of a people who have lived long between two paradigms.

#### THE MANIFESTED LEVEL OF SOCIO-CULTURAL DISTURBANCE

We now ask what can be learned from the myth about the intensity and continuity of the intrusion upon the original world-view of these people. Cumpsty (1991) writes in chapter 9 of levels of disturbance in socio-cultural experience and in chapter 10 he discusses the different consequences of acute versus chronic disturbance. We now bring these aspects of the theory to bear upon the myth.

i) Internal Evidence of Levels of Socio-Cultural Disturbance

Religious change, aimed at maintaining or restoring a sense of belonging, takes place in different ways as the level of socio-cultural disturbance intensifies. Cumpsty describes a number of distinguishable stages in the situation where there is another tradition on offer. This seems not to have been the case here but the stages are nevertheless appropriate. He describes for medium level disturbance what he calls the "protective stage". The characteristics of this stage include the strengthening of myth, both in quantity and coherence, as ordinary life experience ceases to be sufficiently stable to be the sole support for belonging. Others are the exorcism from the group of divisive members and the development of specifically religious rituals unrelated to every-day existence.

The nature of the Tjakova myth and what we know of its telling, suggest that it had become central in these people's sense of belonging. The myth itself contains the symbolic exorcism of those who would not go forward with Tjakova. There is no mention of specifically religious rituals. This suggests that the level of disturbance had gone beyond the "search stage" to the "protective stage" and that its consequences had become enshrined in this myth but that the disturbance was not high within this level. This relates to what will be described as the second and third perspectives under the next heading.

Among the characteristics of the next stage, one labeled as "paradoxical" or "irrational", is the development of "flag" words or beliefs that function better for the integration of the adherents precisely because they are virtually unrelated to the now chaotic experience of every-day life. We see no evidence of such in this myth. All the symbols used are easily identifiable with real life experience. There is no evidence in the myth that the "paradoxical stage" was ever reached.

#### ii) Perspectives on Every-Day Life Experience

For the situation where pressure is brought upon a tradition in the Immediate World Affirming type and where the effort is being made to conserve the tradition, Cumpsty describes three possible perspectives upon experience demanded by different degrees of its unacceptability and whether this be acute or chronic.

The first perspective is in operation where the inter-relation of aspects of every-day experience provide a sufficient structure to support the sense of belonging. The second is where a standing back from the multiple aspects of experience takes place, such that a sense of the whole existing above and beyond its parts is obtained. This may or may not receive specific symbolization and may or may not be modeled as personal.

The third is where significant and certainly aberrant aspects of experience receive symbolization and symbolic inter-relationship such that they can be included or explained away, and hopefully manipulated. This last perspective can become incredibly elaborated and serviced by large numbers and varieties of specifically religious functionaries, rituals, places and artifacts.<sup>6</sup>

There is always evidence in a culture of the first perspective although it can be pushed out of the specifically religious realm. The Vakavango, however, always used metaphorical language of the life-world, that is, where literal language could have been used and is now increasingly used, custom decreed the metaphoric. Discourse about the life-world was symbolic but not because it had to be.

The second perspective is always potentially present and is actually so in this myth. The Tjakova myth speaks of the "sender" but not, as we have seen, in highly personal terms.

There is no evidence of the third perspective in the myth. There are no symbolic entities related to aspects of life and then integrated in the style Cumpsty likens to the mechanism of a watch.

This is "perspective two" myth.

There could be two reasons for the absence of moves into the third perspective or into the paradoxical stage. The first



is that the unacceptability of life experience had never in recent times reached that level. Internal and external evidence suggests that this is not the case. The second is that migration, with its tendency toward transcendence, provided a safety-valve so that this tradition community did not have to struggle relentlessly to maintain a sense of integration in present experience. Instead of elaborating a complex and manipulatable set of symbolic relationships between aspects of the natural world they allowed their hope to move into the future. That is, they began the process of bridging out.

## AN AFTERTHOUGHT ON METHOD

We tried not to make too much of local significance out of what might be universal features. In particular we have been aware that cyclical style could be a narrative device, and have only pressed the importance of cycles in this myth because it was in fact found to be a highly significant feature of experience in this area, as well as the norm in the Immediate World Affirming paradigm.

On the other hand we have asked whether there are structures within this myth that the processes in which we have been engaged might not have revealed. Are there structures that are not those necessitated by the process of modeling a reality that one would belong to, nor by those structures in the reality that the myth's adherents experience which can reasonably be predicted from particular experiences that one knows to have been specifically significant for them? If there are, then we believe that the only ones that might have been available to us would be such as to be revealed by a careful structural analysis recognizing the paradigm for reality from which one starts. On the other hand, as we indicated earlier, detailed structural analysis of a myth that requires translation from a highly metaphorical language and which also employs a variety of languages for symbolic purposes is a daunting task hardly likely to reward the effort.

To understand myth as an instrument of religious expression; to be aware of the elements in the possible models for a

reality to which one would belong and the sort of experiences that lead to movements between them; to know the various possibilities for bridging these elements where models are mixed and their consequences; to know these things and then to go in quest of locally significant experiences that may have shaped the sense of reality, is not the only way to enter upon analysis of a myth, as our tentative use of lessons learned from the structural analysis of narrative indicates, but we believe that it has proved to be a profitable way.

It has led to a better understanding of the contemporaneity of myth and of its generation and modification in a process not unlike group psychoanalysis. It has revealed the nature of this myth as consistent with an extended period of migration. It identifies it as what Cumpsty calls bridging myth, bridging, not between the contradictory aspects of experience with which the structural anthropologists were concerned, but bridging out from one basic paradigm for reality toward another. It has enabled us to suggest something about the myth's history and to explain some of its aberrant features.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly for the reader with a general interest in the field rather than an interest in the myths and history of the Kavango, our analysis seems to confirm what Cumpsty says when he protests that the structural analysis of myth as a primary entity, rather than as a tool of religious expression, is a very dubious proceeding. If Calloud is correct, that a structural

analysis of myth requires that one begin by breaking down the myth into units on the basis of meaning, then even before that the analysis must discover the paradigm for reality within which the myth moves. That is, discover which religious type or types the myth serves. This became clear when we showed how the meaning of everything, including the nature of the "Sender" and of attitudes toward the "Villainy", depends upon which paradigm for reality one is moving within. Meaning significant units do not have to be the same in the two world views. The identification of the paradigm or bridged paradigms in operation is the first logical step in the analysis of a myth, whatever may be the prior practical steps needed to arrive at an understanding of what that might be. If we should be right in this, then it may be the case that any quest to understand culture qualitatively must begin by making clear the paradigm for reality within which one is operating.

<sup>1</sup> Much of what follows in this sub-section is suggested by the early part of Cumpsty's paper "A Religious Approach to the Development of the Biblical Tradition", Religion in Southern Africa vol 3 # 2, and of discussions with him about its application to this myth.

<sup>2</sup> The essential definition of a tradition community according to Cumpsty, is an aggregation within which the twin processes of incarnation and distillation are taking place and, in mixed paradigm aggregations, the processes of bridging and cleansing. We will return to bridging shortly.

<sup>3</sup> For example, other tribes in the same general area.

<sup>4</sup> See for example the early records set out in Cline W, Mining and Metallurgy in Negro Africa, (Menasha, Wisconsin, George Banta, 1937)

<sup>5</sup> For examples of such bridging symbols see Cumpsty, 1991, pp. 813 & 814 and references.

<sup>6</sup> Cumpsty (1991, p.528) makes reference to the Dinka of the Sudan and, more strongly, to the Yoruba of Nigeria as examples of this elaboration process in perspective 3.

## APPENDIX

### OTHER MYTHS OF THE VAKAVANGO REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

#### The Diranene Myth

Distribution of this myth is centred within the Vakwangali and Vambunnza groups, however, the myth is known within the Vashambyu, Vagciriku and Hambukushu. The more eastward one moves the less one finds knowledge of the myth.

The myth is as follows:-

In the ancient time there was a queen who was married by a man who was a foreigner and consequently she went to live in his country. Her husband was a hunter and they always had meat. He hunted elands and gnus, but his queen became pregnant and could then eat nothing except the eggs of an eagle.

One day the man and his son went again into the forest to fetch eggs from the nest of the eagle where they had daily gone to fetch them. The eagle, however, had noticed that there was something which kept stealing the eggs.

So the eagle had put a pangolin into the nest to guard the eggs.

When the man, high up in the tree, reached the nest full of eagle eggs, the pangolin caught one of his arms and fastened it against a branch of the tree. He then began to sing: "Mbambangili - Mbambangili na kwat' ame nakwata. Mbambangili - Mbambangili na kwat'ame nakwata muruswaura mambo!" (Mbambangili, Mbambangili I caught him, I caught him. Mbambangili, Mbambangili I caught him, I caught him, the one who has no respect for another person's home).<sup>1</sup> The eagle from a distance answered: "Kwata! kwaterera!" (Hold him! hold him steady!)

When the eagle arrived at the nest it tore the man into pieces. After the eagle had flown away, the son gathered the pieces from the body of his father and carried them home in a basket. Arriving home the son showed his mother the pieces from the body of his father and said: "Look now mother, my father is dead on your behalf, because you did not want to eat other food but only the eggs of an eagle!"

The queen began crying and she called her two children, a boy and a girl, and sang to them: "My children, when I die - Diranene it is becoming late - you must follow the main paths - Diranene it is becoming late - you must go to Diranene - Diranene it is becoming late - Diranene and Namwandi - Diranene it is becoming late." She took a wooden needle and stabbed it into her navel and died.

The next morning the son and daughter, with their ox Namburu and a woman slave, started to follow the paths to go to their uncle in a country unknown to Diranene and Namwandi. The journey lasted many days and they were hungry and thirsty. When they came to a wild orange tree bearing ripe oranges, the girl refused to eat the fruits which had fallen on the ground.

The woman slave was asked to climb the tree to bring down fresh fruit, but the slave answered: "No, the wild orange trees in this region cannot be climbed by the ordinary people but only by those from the royal family." So the brother of the girl climbed into the tree and picked fruits which he threw down for his sister but the woman slave jumped forward and prevented the girl from getting any of the wild oranges. The woman consumed all of them. When the brother climbed down he held only one wild orange in his hand and he gave it to his hungry sister.

After many days they came at a deep well of cool water. The slave was asked to go down into the well to fetch water. The woman slave responded: "No, the wells in this region cannot be gone down into by the ordinary people but only by those from the royal families." The boy went down the well and filled a container with water which he passed to his sister. The woman slave jumped forward and took the container out of the hands of the girl and drank the water. Then she went close to the mouth of the well, causing the walls to collapse and bury the boy deep in the ground. The woman slave undressed and ordered the

girl from the royal family to dress like a slave while she dressed herself like a queen.

After some weeks they arrived at the village of Diranene and Namwandi and the woman slave pretended to be the daughter of the queen and she referred to the true daughter of the queen as her slave.

Early in the morning the daughter was sent to chase birds which were busy eating the crops. Thinking that there was nobody near, the girl climbed onto an anthill and started singing loud to chase away the birds: "Tya! tya! mbrrr! Oh! the birds in this region cannot be chased by those from the royal family but only by those from ordinary families! Diranene, Diranene, Diranene, Diranene it is becoming late, Diranene and Namwandi, Diranene it is becoming late, my mother told us, Diranene it is becoming late, when I die, Diranene it is becoming late, you must follow the main paths, Diranene it is becoming late, you must go to Diranene, Diranene it is becoming late, Diranene and Namwandi, Diranene it is becoming late, tya! tya! Mbrrrr!"

An old woman was listening to the words of that song and in the evening she called the other adults secretly and told them what she had heard when the girl was singing.

The next morning, many of the women went near to the anthill and hid themselves among the milletstraw. The girl again climbed onto the anthill and sang the song she



had sung the previous day. After she had finished singing the women came out of the milletstraw and asked her: "Little girl what is it that you are singing that so touched our feelings?" "I am only singing to chase away these birds" answered that girl. "No little girl, please tell us. We will never tell your queen what you tell us" urged the women.

"I am singing about my suffering here as a slave. Before my mother died, she told us to follow the main paths, to go to our uncles Diranene and Namwandi. On our way, that woman, who is now pretending to be the daughter of my mother, jumped purposely on the walls of the well which collapsed on my brother, killing and burying him. Then that woman undressed herself and me. She put on the royal clothing and I have had to put on slave clothing until now!" The girl started to cry.

In the evening the girl and the pretending queen were brought in front of the ox, Namburu, and each of them got a turn to call the ox's name. First the pretended queen started to call the ox: "Namburu!, Namburu!, Namburu!" but the ox was quiet. Then the girl's turn came and she called the ox: "Namburu!, Namburu!, Namburu!" to which Namburu responded and the ox came close to the girl.

That pretending queen said: "It is not surprising. Slaves are always with the cattle and the cattle get used to them". The next morning Diranene, Namwandi and the little girl pretended of going somewhere for a few days

and she, as a slave, should carry their things. They took Namburu with them. When they came to the spot where the well-walls collapsed on the boy, Namburu started digging with his legs until the boy was found. He was still alive. From then on the two children were kept in a secret place and a big celebration was prepared.

On the celebration day, the pretending queen thought that the celebration was for her. When the two children appeared in front of the big crowd which was waiting to start the celebration, the crowd jumped up and killed the pretending queen. Thereafter the two children were happy with their uncles and aunts and their cousins.

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#### Chief Sambilikita from the Egg

This myth is rooted mainly within the Vakwangali and Vambunza. It is recorded in a reading book called "kwetu ko Kavango:"for Standard Two "We belong to Kavango." The reading book is published at Finnish Mission, Oniipa, in Ovambo. The year of publication is not indicated in the book.

The myth is as follows:

#### Part 1

In the ancient time there were two children. The elder

one was called Siyengo and his little sister was called Nehova. (Both of these names are still to be found among the Vakwangali and Vambunza).

One day when their parents were away at work, the children were playing alone at home. Siyengo said to his sister: "Let's go into the bush to eat wild fruits." When they arrived at a fruit bearing tree Nehova refused to eat the fruits which were lying underneath the tree and consequently she climbed up into the tree to get fresh fruit. While she was busy eating the fruits the tree pulled itself out of the ground with all its roots and started flying in the air like a bird. Siyengo shouted "help! help! my sister Nehova is being carried away by a tree. What shall I do to save her? I will follow the shadow of the tree wherever it takes her." So Siyengo walked in the shadow of the flying tree that carried his sister Nehova.

In the night the tree stood in one place in the air and Siyengo slept in its shadow. In the morning it started moving again and Siyengo moved under in its shadow.

One day the tree came down on earth and Nehova got off but now they were in an unknown country. Siyengo was very relieved but neither child knew where they had come from.

While they were standing there an old woman came and said: "My little children where do you come from?" The old woman continued "With whom do you come here?" The

children responded: "Grandmother, we lost our way in the bush and now we do not know where we came from". The old woman said: "Come my little children, let me take you to the village of the chief."

When they arrived at the village of the chief, the latter asked the old woman "Where did you find these children?" The old woman responded: "I found the children in the bush. I do not know where they came from. I only brought them to the chief." The chief asked the old woman: "What shall I pay you?" "You can give me what I enjoyed when I was still young." (c.f. the second old woman in the Ijakova myth).

The old woman got what she enjoyed when she was still young. She was satisfied and returned to her own place in great joy. The two children remained with the chief.

## Part 2

The chief asked Siyengo: "You! is this girl your wife?" Siyengo responded: "No chief, she is my sister". The chief became angry and said: "You are lying. I the chief am asking you whether this girl is your wife and you tell me this nonsense that she is your sister!" Siyengo responded: "It is true, my Lord, she is my sister." The chief asked that question because Nehova was a beautiful girl and he wanted to marry her himself. The chief shouted: "Nehova!", and Nehova responded: "Yes my Lord."

The chief said: "Is it true what Siyengo has said, that he is your brother?" Nehova responded: "That is the truth my Lord, Siyengo is my true brother". The chief did not believe their words and he decided to kill Siyengo. Siyengo was killed and he took Nehova to be his wife.

In course of time Nehova became pregnant and she brought an egg into the world. Nehova splattered the egg against a tree and told the old woman about it. The old woman gave Nehova good advice, saying that if she should happen to bring an egg into the world again, she must put it somewhere on the sunshelter (utara). When Nehova became pregnant for the second time she again delivered an egg into the world but this time she followed the advice of the old woman.

After a few days they heard a sound "Pwaa!" and a voice saying: "I am Sambilikita, who came with my bow and arrow". When they went there, they saw a small boy holding a bow and arrows. He said: "Why are you staring at me like that? I am Sambilikita who came with my bow and arrows." Nehova was very glad. "Where did you come from" asked Sambilikita. "I do not know where we came from" Nehova responded. "Why did you come here?" asked Sambilikita. "You my child" said Nehova, "when we came here I was with your uncle Siyengo who later on was killed by this father of yours." "Where did they bury him?" asked Sambilikita. "Come, let me take you to his grave" said Nehova. After she had showed him the grave of his uncle they returned home.

Part 3

One day Sambilikita took a stick and went to the grave of his uncle Siyengo. He beat on the grave with the stick and said: "Pu! Siyengo who went into the earth come out. Siyengo who went into the earth come out. Pu! Pu!" ("Pu" is the sound made by the stick when beaten on the ground) The earth on the grave started to crack and Siyengo came out. Sambilikita took him to a hut where he hid him. He then went to his mother, Nehova: "Mother if you could see Siyengo, would you recognise him?" said Sambilikita. "My child, why are you making me cry? Your uncle is dead many years since, how can you ask me whether I would recognise him!" said Nehova. "Come here mother, do not worry!" said Sambilikita. Nehova and Sambilikita went to the hut and Nehova's eyes caught those of Siyengo and she fainted of a great joy. People came and poured cold water on her and she revived. Sambilikita, Nehova and Siyengo were very happy to be united.

Part 4

Sambilikita said to Nehova and Siyengo: "Listen, I would like us to return to where you came from!" Nehova and Siyengo responded: "You are a child, you could never know where we came from. We do not know." "If that is so, wait and you will see!" said Sambilikita.

One day when the chief had gone to drink beer at the

neighbouring villages, Sambilikita said to his uncle and mother: "Be ready, we are going to our country!" When they started their journey Sambilikita sent a cock to deliver a message to the chief who was still drinking beer at the neighbouring villages. The cock came there and said: "Kekerekee! while you are drinking beer Sambilikita is gone!" Those who were there said: "People be quiet, let us listen to that cock!" The cock repeated: "Kekerekee, while you are drinking beer Sambilikita is gone!" The chief was shocked and said: "Oh! my child is gone. That is what this cock is saying. I will follow him!"

The chief started singing: "Mugenda, muguzu, muguzu!" (which means: "as you are walking let your legs carry you slowly so that I may catch you.") When the chief came to his village he said: "Ah hhm! It is true, they are gone!" While running and following their tracks he started to sing "Mugenda mugenda muguzu muguzu mugenda muguzu mugenda muguzu muguzu mugenda mugenda muguzu" (In contemporary Rukwangali that would be: "Mugende mugende mugaze mugaze" which means ("because you are walking you must become tired") The chief then turned into a goblin and said: "Let me delay them with one of my spells."

An impenetrable bush of bamboos appeared in front of Sambilikita, Siyengo and Nehova. Sambilikita then called the hippopotamuses to make a way through the thicket of bamboos, which they did. The goblin then delayed them

with an other trick and again a thicket appeared in front of Sambilikita, Siyengo and Nehova. Sambilikita then called the elephants to make a way for them, which they did. Then the goblin started singing: "Mugenda mugenda muguzu muguzu mugenda mugenda muguzu muguzu muqu" - "ah! they are really gone! I will delay them with thorns on the ground!" Sambilikita, Siyengo and Nehova could not walk with their bare feet on the thorns. Sambilikita appealed to the moles who started to make mounds of earth ahead of Sambilikita, Siyengo and Nehova who walked on the heaps of soil. The goblin running and singing "Mugenda mugenda muguzu muqu - ah! these people are really gone! I will confuse them with two paths ahead of them!" Sambilikita, Siyengo and Nehova came to the place where the path divided into two ways. The one was a dirty path and the other one was very clean. Sambilikita asked: "Which of these paths are we going to follow?" "I will follow the clean path", said Nehova. "Oh, is that so? O.K., you can follow that path but I will follow the dirty one", said Sambilikita.

#### Part 5

Nehova and her followers followed the clean path and they sang: "Clean path take us, clean path takes us, clean path takes us home!" On their tracks the goblin was running and singing: "Mugenda mugenda mugenda muguzumugu ....."!



Nehova and her followers said: "Look at that which is following us. That is a goblin!" They continued singing while they ran: "clean path takes us, clean path takes us, clean path takes us home!", but they were shocked and said: "If we had gone with Sambilikita on the dirty path we would not have come into such trouble!" They ran on singing: "Clean path takes us, clean path takes us, clean path takes us home!". On their tracks the goblin ran singing: "Mugenda mugenda muguzumugu ....." "I am going to swallow all of you! I am the goblin today. I am going to swallow all of you!"

The goblin swallowed Nehova and her followers: "Putu putu putu mburukutu swekerera." (These are words resembling the sound of the running of the goblin and the chewing of bones and the sound of the throat).

#### Part 6

Meanwhile Sambilikita on the dirty path walked and sang: "Dirty path lead me, dirty path lead me, dirty path lead me home!"

After swallowing Nehova and her followers, the goblin decided to follow Sambilikita on the dirty path in order to catch him and to swallow him too. So the goblin ran behind and sang: "Mugenda mugenda muguzumugu ....!" "ah! today I am going to swallow you!"

Sambilikita used his craft and shot at the goblin an arrow of thirstiness and the goblin saw water in front of him.

The goblin needed to run to the pool of water. "Putu putu putu" but when the goblin started to drink the water the pool dried up immediately. "Oh! mmm! - this damned Sambilikita is going to kill me today with thirst! this damned Sambilikita! where is water? - ah! I am dying of thirsty - Mburukutu!" (Mburukutu is the sound of the teeth of the goblin grinding against each other while he is dying).

Sambilikita came to where the goblin died. "You! Nehova and your followers, are you inside?" asked Sambilikita. "Yes, we are inside!" responded the voices within. Sambilikita opened the goblin and Nehova and her followers came out. They gathered wood to burn up all of the goblin.

## Part 2

Sambilikita said to his mother: "Look here mother, that clean path leads to ill luck but the dirty path leads to good luck. Let us follow the dirty path and it will lead us to happiness and home."

"Dirty path leads us, Dirty path leads us, Dirty path leads us home!" Sambilikita sang as they were marching along the dirty path.

"The land is now near, we will soon be home. Let us move fast!" said Sambilikita.

"Dirty path leads us, Dirty path leads us, Dirty path leads us home!" Sambilikita sang as they were marching along the dirty path. "There is the home, there is the home. Is that not the one from which you came?" asked Sambilikita. Both Siyengo and Nehova said: "That is the one! Oh! we are back home again! Oh! we have arrived!" Sambilikita called the people of that home and said: "Are these two not your relatives who disappeared many years ago? The people said: "Yes, they are the relatives of ours who disappeared long ago!" They continued saying: "See now! You Sambilikita will be our chief, the one who will lead us!".

#### Comments:

This version of the Sambilikita myth is drawn from oral telling by elder people and compared to the written one in Rukwangali provided by Damian Nekare who is recording the Rukwangali grammar and literature.

This myth reveals a strongly modified form of part the Tjakova myth and reflects the returning of the Vakwangali royal groups from Ovambo where they were in captivity during the multiple invasions of the Ukwangali region by Ovambo tribes.

# WHERE CATTLE CAME FROM

According to a certain Vakwangali and Vambunza myth, cattle were once like the other wild game. People's subsistence was based mainly on the gathering of wild fruits and roots and on hunting. They had never known of such a thing as cow's milk. When they finally tamed cattle they learned to drink fresh and sour milk, for as yet they did not know of such things as porridge.

The myth of the cattle is as follows:

In the ancient time there was a region which had much wild game. There was also a hunter who hunted the various kinds of game and provided meat for all the people in the vicinity. The people gave him the name of "Mukongo". 2

One day Mukongo got up very early, as he was used to doing whenever he went hunting. He went deep into the forest, but no wild game could be seen. He took with him his Khoisan manservant to carry water. When it became very very hot they slept underneath a tree for a while. Suddenly funny noises led the hunter to get up. He heard animal noises which he had never heard before. He woke up the sleeping Khoisan man and they moved in the direction of the noise. They walked a long time, till they came to a great plain. They were petrified (astounded?) to see such a great plain full of wild game making continuous noises. The type of wild game was new to them and it was

the female animals and the small animals which were making the noises. When they approached the animals, the animals moved to surrounded them and they wanted to run away, but there was no opportunity. Petrified like salt, they stood motionless and the animals licked their bodies, which were dirty, until the bodies became clean. After the animals left them, the hunter and his Khoisan manservant set out for home, where they arrived after walking for a whole night and a whole day.

## Section 2

They arrived home in the evening but the hunter did not tell the people about the animals or the wide plain. Early the next morning the hunter got up and ordered his Khoisan man to make fire at the gathering place (sinyanga). After that the hunter called all the men and boys to come to the gathering place. He said to them: "Men and boys, I called you here early this morning to tell you something. Listen very carefully."

"Yesterday, as usual, my Khoisan man and I went hunting. We were unlucky and did not find animals. When we left a tree under which we rested for a while, we came to a wide plain. What we saw there it is not possible to convey properly by means of words. There was no open space in that whole wide plain. Everywhere there were animals and all of them animals such as we have never seen before. These animals are now wild but it is possible that they

may easily be tamed. Ask Ncame (the name of the Khoisan man) to confirm what I am telling you. That is the story for which I called you here."

"Please! Today, all of you must prepare bows and arrows, spears, guns and sticks. Tomorrow, very early in the morning, we will go to that plain and try to drive those animals home. We will then try to tame them. I will tell the women and girls to make enough food for our journey."

All the men and boys listened to the hunter. All of them began to prepare for the adventure. When the women and girls got up in the morning they were told by the hunter to prepare enough food for the men and boys who would accompany the hunter.

### Section 3

Very early in the morning the boys were already waiting outside the village. The hunter, who was the leader of that village, whistled, and all the men and boys gathered at the gathering place and drank the ritual beer of which it is taboo for women to partake. After this ritual drinking the journey started and the hunter sang: "We are going into the forests with a gatherer - we are hunting with a hunter - spirits of our ancestors lead us there - the dead must accompany us - to the plain of the gatherer - to the wide plain of God." The journey took the whole day and the hunter kept repeating his song.

On the way they rested for a while under the same tree where the hunter and his Khoisan man heard the noises of the animals the first time. After they had enjoyed their meal (which they ate while making a noise that the hunter had told them to make so that they would not hear the noises of the animals) the hunter said: "Get up! let us go! it is now cooler, it is still far where we are going. Let us start singing our song." They walked while singing: "We are going in the forests with the gatherer - we are hunting with a hunter - spirits of ancestors lead us there - the dead must accompany us - to the plain of the gatherer - to the wide plain of God."

When they came near to the wide plain, the hunter told them to lay down all that they were carrying and to look for firewood. It was evening. They slept there and he told the boys: "Boys we have arrived at the plain of the gatherer, the wide plain of God. Listen very carefully in the night and you will hear that of which I told you". When they slept, the hunter sat awake the whole night. In the morning they greeted each other and said that they had heard noises of animals but that is was the first time in their lives that they had heard such noises.

After breakfast the hunter said to them: "We are going to split into three groups. One group must move into the western part of the herd, another group into the eastern part and I and Ncame will move into the middle of the herd to see whether the animals are aggressive or not."

Soon after they had received that order they came to the wide plain.

The sight caused the men and boys to stand petrified. They had never seen such a big herd of animals, nor one that kept on making noises. "Do not be afraid, do as I told you" said the hunter. They found courage and started moving forward. When the animals noticed them coming, they came to meet them half way. Some of the men and boys started to run back home but the hunter shouted at them: "Hey, do not run away. These animals are not aggressive to people, they only want to lick your bodies. Come back!" They came back and walked forward as the hunter had told them - one group into the western part, another into the eastern part, and the hunter and Ncame in the middle of the herd. When they came together at the other side of the animals, none of them were injured because the spirits of their ancestors had made the animals to behave well.

The hunter then said: "When I have finish making the offering, you must consume all your food, only water must be carried with us. While we are underway none must eat nor carry anything he intends to eat. We are sacrificing ourselves to suffer hunger the whole way home for our animals. While we are driving our animals home you must sing as follows: "We went in the forests with the gatherer - and hunting with a hunter - we did not find meat we found that which we will tame - in the plain of



the gatherer - the wide plain of God - we are going home  
- we are going to our country".

#### Section 4

The hunter made a sharp whistle by blowing into the horn of a "steenbok" three times. All animals kept quiet and looked at the hunter. He shot in the air while aiming in the northern direction. All the animals turned in the northern direction and started moving forward. The hunter said: "My boys and grandchildren, drive our animals which God and his wife have given us. Drive them home to tame them." They drove the animals while they sang together. "We went in the forests with a gatherer - and hunting with a hunter - we did not find meat - we found that which we can tame - in the plain of the gatherer - in the wide plain of God - we are going home - we are going to our country".

The boys were very happy and started to say which or which animals were going to be theirs. The hunter, however, kept on encouraging them to drive the animals home, saying that at home everyone would get some of the animals to be his. The animals were never quiet, they kept on making noises. Some of them made "moo" and the younger ones made "mee" noises.

Because such noises were new to the boys, they heard them as if the bigger animals were making "ngoo" and the younger ones "mbee" noises. To them the noises that

animals were making sounded like "ngoo-mbee". So, on the way home, whenever one of the animals moved out of line, one boy would tell another: "Bring that "ngoombee" (into the herd). As from that day till now the Kavango people, the Ovambo, the Herero and many other peoples in Angola, Zambia, Zaire, even Uganda, call cattle "ngombe".

In the evening they arrived at their country and the women, old people and children heard noises, "moo-mee", all around. They were shocked and wanted to run away and to cross over the river. The hunter who knew that this might happen, shot into the air with his gun. The people at the village then knew that it must be the hunter and his party who were coming with the animals which made such noises. They could see clouds of dust in the direction from where the noises were coming. They heard people singing: "We went into the forests with the gatherer - out hunting with a hunter - we did not find meat - we found that which we can tame - we arrived at our country - we arrived at home - women be happy and make sounds with your tongues - royal women clap your hands - the gatherer is coming with a herd - a hunter is bringing wealth".

They arrived at the village, and the women were happy and made sharp sounds with their tongues to welcome the hunter and his party, as well as the big herd of animals. The boys drove the big herd of animals into the plain near the village while they were saying: "Let us drive

"ngoombee" into the plain so that they can be near the village."

That is how the cattle happened to come into the hands of men.

(The myth recorded by Damian N Nekare on 11 October 1941 in the Ukwangali area). Only older people within the Vakwangali and Vambunza groups still know this story or myth.

In Rukwangali: Ngombe: cattle singular.

Nongombe: cattle plural.

In Rushambyu, Rugciriku and Thimbukushu: Ngombe cattle (singular). Ngombe: cattle (plural).

In these three languages the plural of the word "ngombe" can only be seen in the whole sentence.

#### The Myth of a Woman

This myth is well-known among the Vagciriku and Vashambyu especially those who occupy, or occupied, the northern bank of the Kavango River. The singing in this myth is in Ruruyi or Rumashi.

The myth is as follows:

In the ancient time there was a girl who was married by a foreign man who took her to an unknown land. There she gave birth to ten children.

One day she gave birth to an eleventh child and from its birth that baby kept on crying without stopping, both day and night. The woman went to consult an old woman in the village:

"Grandmother", said the woman, "I have come to consult you about this baby. From its birth until now, this baby has kept on crying. I do not know what it wants. May my grandmother give me advice on how to cope with this nerveracking situation?"

"My daughter, it sounds like something demanding to know its origin," said the old woman. "Which origin are you talking about grandmother?" asked the woman. "Your origin my daughter," answered the old woman. "What has this baby to do with my origin, and anyway it does not know about my origin. Even I myself am no longer in a position to say where I came from," said the woman. "Your baby is missing his real grandmother, uncles, aunts, and cousins. You have no choice other than that of going back to your original land, my daughter," said the old woman.

"How will I know where I came from? How will I manage to go there without knowing in which direction I came?" asked the woman. "It is very simple, you must plant a pumpkin seed behind your hut. When it starts growing it will crack the earth and the crack in the ground will face in a certain direction and the earth will continue cracking forward. Follow that opening in the ground. At night it will stop cracking but in the morning it will start forward again. One day the crack in the ground will enter a hut covered with pumpkin branches and leaves. That is your own mother's hut. When you come there the baby will suddenly stop crying and will start smiling in the hands of your mother. That is all what this baby would like to have, my daughter," said the old woman. "Thank you very much grandmother, I will try to follow your advice," answered the woman.

The woman returned to her hut and, while the baby cried, planted the seed of a pumpkin behind her hut. After a few days the first leaves of the pumpkin appeared out of the ground and a crack in the ground, starting from the place where the pumpkin grew, was facing in a certain direction.

She called her ten children and said to them: "Do you see this crack in the ground. This crack will lead us back home to where your father found me as a young girl. This little brother of yours, who keeps on crying, will stop crying only when my mother holds him in her hand. The spirits of our ancestors are haunting this baby, here in

this foreign country, and they would like to see us within our own people. Tomorrow morning you will drive our cattle and we will follow this crack in the ground. Be prepared." said the woman.

Early the next morning the children drove the cattle; following the crack in the ground. While following the crack, the woman sang to stop the baby's continuous crying: "Mbu holoka ndembele yange, mbu holoka ndembele yange, tuya kwa nana Matumbo vayaya, uno muligho gho ndiya ndembele yange, kusema kutumbatheka vayaya, uno muligho gho ndiya ndembele yange!" (You keep quiet my baby, you keep quiet my baby, we are going to my mother Matumbo. I will follow this crack my baby, to give birth and to become pregnant, I will follow this crack my baby.) 3

When it became evening the ground stopped cracking forward. Then they put down all that they carried with them. The grown boys took axes (mbo) to chop thorn branches to build a thorn branche kraal for their cattle. Some of them chopped wood to make a fire. While her children slept that night, the mother kept on trying to sooth the crying baby, singing one or another song until early the next morning.

They dismantled the thorn branche kraal and drove their cattle, following the crack in the ground. The mother started singing again: "Mbu holoka ndembele yange, mbu holoka ndembele yange, tuya kwa nana Matumbo vayaya, uno

muligho gho ndiya ndembebe yange, kusema kutumbatheka  
vayaya, uno muligho gho ndiya ndembebe yange!"

After they had spent more than two months following the crack in the ground, the children became rebellious toward their mother and wanted to return back to the land of their father. "Mother, you are very stupid to believe the story of that old woman. See now, we are running short of food and water here in the unoccupied region. Let us go back because this damned crack will lead us to our own graves. Let us return to our country and forget about the unknown land to which this foolish crack is supposed to lead us!" said the grown boys. They started to turn the cattle back in order to return to the land of their father but suddenly the baby cried vehemently. The woman pleaded with her children. "Let us try to follow the crack in the ground forward and if we do not see any sign of human beings within two or three weeks, we will then be obliged to return to the land where we are coming from." In the evening the cracking in the ground stopped. They spent the night there while the mother sang to the crying baby.

The next morning the crack in the ground started cracking the ground forward. The woman, her children and their cattle followed that crack. "Mbu holoka ndembebe yange, mbu holoka ndembebe yange, tuya kwa nana Matumbo vayaya, uno muligho gho ndiya, ndembebe yange, kusema kutumbatheka vayaya, uno muligho gho ndiya, ndembebe

yange, kusema kutumatheka vayaya, uno muligho gho ndiya, ndembele yange."

Suddenly they came to a big village and the crack in the ground went until it was in a hut which was covered by pumpkin branches and leaves. When they came to the entrance of the hut an old woman and other people approached them, because all of them were surprised by that funny and secretive cry of the baby. "You are back my daughter! Give my grandson to me!" said the old woman, Matumbo. When old Matumbo held the baby in her hands and talked to it, the baby suddenly stopped crying and had a smile on its lips. All relatives came together and a big celebration took place.

#### Comments:

1. Susan Runguro was the one who usually told us these stories while we were little boys. Many other people were also telling us these stories. To correlate this version the researcher managed to trace Susan Runguro on the 20th October 1989. For a consideration she agreed to tell the Myth of the Woman and the myth of Mukunwa together with other myths. The researcher was convinced because the versions were the same as she was telling them while we were still small children.



2. In Kavango tradition when a young person is to address an old woman, he or she will be obliged to say "grandmother" or "grandfather" if an old man or even "uncle" or "aunt" though in actual fact they are not related to one another. In the "Myth of a Woman" we have come across this style of speaking. At the end of the myth a true grandmother to the children appeared.

3. The word "ndembele" is a diminutive of the word "Ndemba" in Tjiwiko one of the Angolan languages. "Ndemba" is a cock, "Ndembele" is a little cock. The woman in her song is referring to her crying baby as "Ndembele" a little cock which is supposed to be understood mythically. Ndembele is also a name among the Hawiko of Angola usually given to a boy.

## THE MYTH OF MUKUNWA

### INTRODUCTION:

This myth is well-known in the Mbukushu, Gciriku and Shambyu regions. The myth is told predominantly in the language of the area but nevertheless mixes various languages. For example, in the Shambyu area it would include Ruggciriku, Thimbukushu, Tjiwiko and Ruruyi.

Tjiwiko is one of the languages in Angola, whereas Ruruyi is the language used in Uruyi and Mashi.

The myth is as follows:

In the ancient time there were seven hunters, who lived with their relatives beside a river.

One day the first hunter crossed the river with his horse to hunt elands in the hinterland on the other side. The journey to the region where the elands lived took him seven days. There was only one pool of water which was situated in the middle of a thicket forest inhabited by varieties of wild game.

Arriving at the pool of water on the seventh day, the hunter was shocked to see an ugly old woman swimming in the pool. "You ugly old creature, get out of this pool! You are making the water dirty!" shouted the hunter.

"Oh! my daughter Namaya get up so that he may see you!" shouted the old woman. Namaya stood up. The hunter could not believe his eyes when he saw the beautiful girl.

"Old woman, is this your daughter?" asked the hunter. "Yes this is my beautiful daughter, Namaya," answered the old woman. "Old woman, how would you respond if I were to propose love to her?" asked the hunter. "I have no objections, you may ask her," answered the old woman. "Beautiful Namaya, I want to marry you, what do you say?"

asked the hunter. "I have no objection," responded Namaya.

The old woman misled them purposely, telling them that they must take the shorter path home while she would take the longer one. In actual fact the path which Namaya and the hunter took was four times longer than the one which the old woman took. At home she prepared food and waited for the pair. When they arrived in the evening, the old woman mocked: "What have you done along the way? No! I know. New love is always like that"

After her son-in-law, the hunter, had finished the meal prepared by the old woman before they arrived home, the old woman pretended to be sick. The only medicine, she said, was a dance. The new son-in-law was asked and was willing to beat the rhythm on a drum: "Musikwa, Ngoma-kumina-mina-musikwa-ngoma-kumina-mina-dentetete-kumina-mina-dentetete-kumina-mina!" The old woman, holding a sharp hoe in her hand, started to sing: "This drum of Namaya it sounds (plays) very highly? and nicely, this drum of Namaya, it sounds very highly and nicely. Then she sang to the rhythms played by her son-in-law: "My hoe it kills - those I know - my hoe - it kills - those I know - my hoe it kills those I know." In the meantime the hunter had the drum between his legs. The old woman suddenly lifted her hoe and violently chopped off the male organs of the hunter, who immediately fell down and died. The old woman rushed into her hut where she cooked

the still bleeding male organs of the hunter. After eating the organs, the old woman came back with a sharp knife to cut the meat in pieces and to put the bones on the sunshelter to dry.

It happened to the next five hunters as it happened to the first hunter.

After the sixth hunter had not returned home but had disappeared, the seventh hunter, whose name was Mukunwa, also decided to go hunting in the hinterland on the other side of the river just as the other six had done.

On the seventh day Mukunwa arrived at the pool of water within the forest. Mukunwa saw an ugly old woman swimming in that pool. "You ugly old woman, get out of this pool! You are making the water dirty!" shouted Mukunwa.

"Oh! my daughter Namaya get up so that he may see you!" shouted the old woman.

Mukunwa, who was himself very handsome, could hardly believe his eyes when he saw the beautiful Namaya.

"Old woman, is this beautiful girl your daughter?" asked Mukunwa. "Yes, she is my daughter, Namaya", answered the old woman. "What would you say if I were to propose love to her?" asked Mukunwa. "I have no objection. You ask her", answered the old woman. "Namaya, what will you say if I tell you I want to marry you?" asked Mukunwa. "I

have no objection" answered Namaya. As before the old woman misled them, saying to them: "You two must take the shorter path home and I will take the longer one."

On the way home, Namaya told Mukunwa: "I want to tell you what has happened to the other six hunters. My mother has killed them. When we come home, please do not eat the food prepared by my mother because the meat is from the bodies of your six friends. The porridge is made of the dried bones of your friends which she stamped. Put a piece of an eland horn above your male organs to prevent them being chopped off by my mother." Mukunwa followed these instructions.

When they arrived home in the evening, as before, the old woman made jokes with them for a while. Then she brought food to her new son-in-law and returned to her hut. Mukunwa did not consume the food.

After a while the old woman appeared again, pretending to be sick, and saying that the only medicine was a dance. Mukunwa was asked and was willing to beat the rhythms on the drum so that his mother-in-law could dance: "Musikwa-ghongoma-kumina-mina-musikwa-ghongoma-kumina-mina-dentetete-kumina-mina-dentetete-kumina-mina." While Mukunwa was busy beating these rhythms on the drum, the old woman started to sing: "This drum of Namaya it sounds highly and nicely, this drum of Namaya it sounds highly and nicely." Then she lifted her hoe and sang: "My hoe kills those I know - my hoe kills those I know - my hoe

kills those I know" and she chopped violently on the hard piece of eland's horn that Mukunwa had put above his male organs. The old woman ran to her hut. In the meantime Mukunwa and Namaya made their escape.

The old woman, carrying containers with various kinds of seeds and grains, followed in their tracks. She sang in Ruruyi: "Mwa nahiti Namaya kamu landala - mwa nahiti Namaya kamu landala - kutjokangera nihende - kamu landala - kutjoka - ngera nihende - kamu landala." (Namaya walked here I will follow her - Namaya walked here I will follow her - I am weary of walking - I will follow her - I am weary of walking - I will follow her)).

Suddenly one of the containers with certain seeds fell and broke into pieces. The old woman shouted: "Uuu! ngcore ya Mukunwa wa kuni twarera mwanange!" (Oh! my enemy, Mukunwa, who took away my daughter.) She picked up all the fallen seeds and followed in their tracks while she sang: "Namaya walked here I will follow her - Namaya walked here I will follow her - I am weary of walking - I will follow her - I am weary of walking - I will follow her." She found them up in a big tree and Namaya said to Mukunwa: "Mukunwa do act swiftly, otherwise we are going to be killed by this vicious merciless old woman". Mukunwa whistled three times. Many lions came and they tore the old woman to pieces.

Mukunwa and Namaya climbed down the tree and continued their journey home. In the meantime the various pieces

from the body of the old woman started jumping to a certain place while each piece was singing: "Come let us reconstruct, come friends, let us reconstruct."

The old woman got up again and picking up all the containers with seeds and grains and followed in the tracks of Mukunwa and Namaya. Time and again one of the containers of seeds or grains fell and broke into pieces. The old woman took time, after she had mended the broken container, to pick up every seed or grain fallen in the sand.

The singing and the falling of the containers followed one another until, for the second time, she found the pair up in a big tree. Namaya said to Mukunwa: "Listen to me, Mukunwa, please do not play. Destroy her or she is going to destroy us." Mukunwa lifted his eyes upwards to heaven and whistled three times. A terrible bolt of lightning struck the old woman mercilessly, and she disappeared in dust and smoke. Mukunwa and Namaya climbed down the big tree and continued their journey home.

On their way home every animal, reptile, insect, amphibian and bird tried to propose love to the beautiful Namaya until they came to the river-crossing on their side of the river. Mukunwa and Namaya sat under a big tree beside the river. Mukunwa made a bird of clay and sent it to deliver a message to his parents and relatives on the other side of the river. Small girls came to fetch water and the bird started signing (in Ruruyi): "You who are

mourning for Mukunwa, take canoes to the other side of the river, Mukunwa is there, Mukunwa is there!" The girls ran home and told the adults, who were busy at the time drinking beer, what the bird had said. The adults did not believe their story.

After a while a few women came down to the river to fetch water. The bird sang again as it had sung when the girls came. The women told the men what they had heard. So the men went down to the river and crossed the river by canoe and found Mukunwa there with his beautiful wife. Mukunwa took a knife and cut a bamboo which he turned into a big canoe. Slaughtered cattle were laid out all the way from the river to within the palace of Mukunwa's father. From their canoe Mukunwa and Namaya walked on top of slaughtered cattle until they came into the palace. A big celebration took place.

Comments on language in this myth:

1. Old woman: Spoke Ruggiriku, Tjiwiko, Rumashi or Ruruyi and Thimbukushu.
2. Namaya spoke Ruggiriku.
3. Mukunwa spoke Ruggiriku
4. Bird sang in Rumashi or Ruruyi.



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<sup>1</sup> Mbambangili (in Rukwangali) is the name for an eagle. In Thimbukushu it is Mbambanyunyi.

<sup>2</sup> (kukongwa = to be lucky in hunting; kukonga = to gather something (in this case meat). Today the appellation "Mukongo" is given exclusively to a hunter who is lucky in killing wild game.

<sup>3</sup> Here the old woman speaks in Thimbukushu.

## SOURCES

### Oral Sources:

Persons interviewed in 1981 in order of time.

1. Chief Maria Mwengere of the Vashambyu - born at Masi (Urui) Place: Kayengona.
2. Father Bernhard Hartmann of the Roman Catholic Station Shambyu. Place: Shambyu
3. Father van Roosmalen of the Roman Catholic Station Shambyu. Place: Shambyu
4. Sister Leopoldine Mühlbauer of the Roman Catholic Station Shambyu. Place: Shambyu
5. Dr. Maria Fisch former medical doctor at Nyangana and Andara. Place: Rundu Administrative Office.
6. Abraham Toho of the Vatjaube remnants within the Kavango Region. Place: Naita.
7. Augustinus Haushiku Place: Naita.
8. Herman Shikongo Place: Katimba
9. Gerhardt Matamu Place: Naita
10. Chief Muyevu of the Vagciriku who were on the north bank of the Kavango River Place: Ndiyona south bank.
11. Chief Alfons Mayevero of the Hambukushu Place: Mukwe
12. Chief Leevi Hakusembe of the Vambunza Place: Rundu.
14. Mr Aloys Hashipara Place: Rundu.
15. Mr Andreas Kandjimi Place: Rundu.
16. Mr Gerhardt Shakadya Place: Rundu
17. Mrs Rebeka Kambundu (born at Urui) Place: Rundu.
18. Mr Petrus Ribebe or Anton Munika (born 1918) Place: Rundu.
19. Mr Johannes Hikerwa Place: Rundu.
20. Mr Martinus Sikongo Place: Rundu
21. Mr Simon Kandere Place: Rundu
22. Mr Shikerete Kundjengena Place: Muhopi

- 23. Mr Richard Kadiva Hashipara Place: Muhopi
- 24. Mr Hilarius Mbangu Place: Gove
- 25. Mr Kabomu Place: Gove
- 26. Mr Kantema Gende Place: Mupapama
- 27. Mr Matamu Place: Mutwarantja

During December 1986 - January 1987 a number of the above were reinterviewed and the following new interviews took place:

- 28. Bishop Bonifatius Haushiku Place: Cathedral Windhoek.
- 29. Mr Bernardus Ndango Place: Katimba
- 30. Mr Gilbert Mutero Place: Naita
- 32. Mr Augustinus Nyangana Place: Gove
- 33. Mrs Nerumbu Sitarara Place: Sinzogoro
- 34. Mrs Ndambu Haunona Place Sinzogoro
- 35. Mrs Ndahepa Haunona Place: Sinzogoro
- 36. Mr Stefanus Thikusho Place: Rundu
- 37. Mr Erastus Muronga Place: Rundu
- 38. Mr Damian Nekara Place: Rundu
- 39. Mr Theophilus Likoro Place: Rundu
- 40. Mr Marbord Shamarambo Place: Rundu

From January 1989 to April 1990 a number of the above were reinterviewed and the following new interviews took place:

- 41. Mrs Susana Runquro Place: Mururwani
- 42. Dr K F R Burdack Place: Windhoek
- 43. Chief Sebastian Kamwanga of the Vagciriku Place: Mamono.
- 44. Mr Michael Mukoya Place: Gove

Many other persons whose names do not appear on this list were interviewed throughout these years on matters other than the Tjakova myth and its immediate context. Such interviews centered around: the origin of the Kavango people, smelting of iron, customs, other myths and legends.

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